Phoenix Edition

DICKEY DOWNY

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BIRD

PATTERSON

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

70
25

Dickey Downy

The Autobiography of a Bird

BY

VIRGINIA SHARPE PATTERSON

AUTHOR OF

"*The Girl of the Period*," "*All on Account of a Bonnet*," "*The Wonderland Children*," *etc.*

With Introduction by

HON. JOHN F. LACEY, M. C.

Drawings by

ELIZABETH M. HALLOWELL

PHILADELPHIA

A. J. Rowland—1630 Chestnut Street

Copyright 1899 by the
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Published April, 1903

From the Society's own Press

Written By
G. R. R.

To

my dear children

Laura, Virgie, and Robert George

this little Volume is

Affectionately Inscribed

Last night Alicia wore a Tuscan bonnet
And many humming birds were fastened on it.
Caught in a net of delicate creamy crêpe
The dainty captives lay there dead together;
No dart of slender bill, no fragile shape
Fluttering, no stir of radiant feather;
Alicia looked so calm, I wondered whether
She cared if birds were killed to trim her bonnet.
Her hand fell lightly on my hana;
And I fancied that a stain of death
Like that which doomed the Lady of Macbeth
Was on her hand.

—*Elizabeth Cavazza*

INTRODUCTION

THIS beautiful volume has been written for a good purpose. I had the pleasure of reading the proof-sheets of the book while in the Yellowstone National Park, where no gun may be lawfully fired at any of God's creatures. All animals there are becoming tame, and the great bears come out of the woods to feed on the garbage of the hotels and camps, fearless of the tourists, who look on with pleasure and wonder at such a scene.

"The child is father of the man," and this volume is addressed to the heart and imagination of every child reader. If children are taught to love and protect the birds they will remember the lesson when they grow old. When children learn to

prefer to take a "snap-shot" at a bird with a camera, rather than with a gun, they will protect these feathered friends for their beauty, even if they do not regard them for their usefulness.

Nature has supplied a system of balances if left to itself. Some forms of insect life are so prolific that but for the voracity and industry of the birds the world would become almost uninhabitable.

Bird life appeals to the eye for its beauty, to the ear for its music, and to the interest of man for its utility. Shooting-clubs have foreseen the extermination that awaits many of the finest of the game birds, and are taking much pains to enforce the laws enacted for game protection. A selfish interest thus is called into activity, and one class of birds is receiving protection through the aid of its own enemies.

But the birds of beautiful plumage are now threatened with extinction by the de-

sire of womankind for personal decoration. Against this destruction Audubon societies are organizing a crusade, and Mrs. Patterson's principal purpose in this book is to direct attention to the wholesale slaughter of the birds of plumage and song.

The Princess of Wales was requested to write in an album her various peculiarities. Among the inquiries was: "What is your greatest weakness?" She answered: "Millinery."

When Napoleon was banished to Elba it is stated that the fallen monarch was followed by Josephine's old millinery bills. How many of these bills were for the plumage of slaughtered birds the historian does not say. But the passion for the beautiful is very strong in the tender hearts of women, and an earnest appeal to the natural gentleness of the sex must be made to enlist them in the defense of the birds.

Mrs. Patterson enters upon this task

with enthusiasm, and many a bird will live to flutter through the trees or glisten in the sunshine and gladden the earth with its beauty that but for this little book would have perched for a brief season upon the headgear of some lovely woman.

Let the good work go on until the mummy of a dead bird will be recognized by all persons as an unfitting decoration for the head of womankind.

JOHN F. LACEY.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE ORCHARD	11
II.	DICKEY DOWNY'S MEDITATIONS	21
III.	THE RULER WITH THE IRON HAND	27
IV.	DICKEY'S COUSINS	43
V.	"DON'T, JOHNNY"	48
VI.	THE PARROT AT A PARTY	63
VII.	A WINTER IN THE SOUTH	82
VIII.	THE PRISON	103
IX.	THE HUNTERS	118
X.	A NEW HOME	126
XI.	THE ILL-MANNERED CHILD	141
XII.	TWO SLAVES OF FASHION	151
XIII.	DICKEY'S VISIT	157
XIV.	THE COUNTRY SCHOOL	170
XV.	POLLY'S FAREWELL	189

COLORED PHOTOGRAPHS

PAGE

The Indigo Bird 16

The Scarlet Tanager 64

The Baltimore Oriole 144

The Bobolink 160

CHAPTER I

THE ORCHARD

Bobolink, that in the meadow
Or beneath the orchard's shadow
Keepest up a constant rattle,
Joyous as my children's prattle,
Welcome to the North again.

—*Thos. Hill.*

MY native home was in a pleasant meadow not far from a deep wood, at some distance from the highway. From this it was separated by plowed fields and a winding country lane, carpeted with grass and fringed with daisies.

While it was yet dawn, long before the glint of the sun found its way through the foliage, the air was musical with the twittering of our feathered colony.

It is true our noisy neighbors, the blue-jays, sometimes disturbed my mother by their hoarse chattering when she was weary of wing and wanted a quiet hour to meditate, but they disturbed us younger ones very little. My mother did not think they were ever still a minute. Constantly hopping back and forth, first on one bough, then on another, flirting down between times to pick up a cricket or a bug, they were indeed, a most fidgetty set. Their restlessness extended even to their handsome top-knots, which they jerked up and down like a questioning eyebrow. They were beautiful to look at had they only possessed a little of the dignity and composure of our family. But as I said, we little ones did not trouble ourselves about them.

The air was so pleasant, our nest so cozy, and our parents provided us such a plentiful diet of nice worms and bugs, that like other thoughtless babies who have nothing

to do but eat, sleep, and grow, we had no interest in things outside and did not dream there was such a thing as vexation or sorrow or crime in this beautiful world. When our parents were off gathering our food, we seldom felt lonely, for we nestled snugly and kept each other company by telling what we would do when we should be strong enough to fly.

At this stage of our existence we were as ungainly a lot of children as could well be imagined. To look at our long, scrawny necks and big heads so disproportioned to the size of our bodies, which were scantily covered with a fuzzy down that scarcely concealed our nakedness, who would have thought that in time we would develop into such handsome birds as the bobolink family is universally considered to be ?

Our mother, who was both very proud and very fond of us, was untiring in her watchful care. No human mother bending over the nursery bed soothing her little one to rest, showed more devotion than did she, as she hovered near the tiny cradle of coarse grass and leaves woven by her

own cunning skill—alert and sleepless when danger was near and enfolding us with her warm, soft wings. Thus tenderly cared for we passed the early sunny days of life.

After we could fly we often visited a fragrant orchard that sent its odors across the grain fields. From its green shade we made short excursions to the rich, black soil in search of some choice tid-bit of a worm turned up by the plow expressly for our dessert. We were indeed glad to be of use to the farmer by devouring these pests so destructive to his crops, but did not limit our labors to these places; we also made it our business to pick off the bugs and slugs that infested the fruit trees, and often extended our efforts to the tender young grape leaves in the arbor and the rose bushes and shrubs in the flower garden.

On a warm morning after a rain was our favorite time for work, and it was pleasant to hear the tap-tap-tapping of our neighbor the woodpecker, as he located with his busy little bill the bugs in the tree limb. It was like the hammer of an indus-

trious blacksmith breaking on the still air. His jaunty red cap and broad white shoulder cape made of him a very pretty object as he worked away blithely and cheerily at his useful task. While the rest of us did not make so much noise at our work, we were equally diligent in picking off the larvæ and borers that ruined the trees, and on a full crop we enjoyed the consciousness of having aided mankind.

On several occasions I had seen our enemy, the cat, slinking stealthily on his padded feet from the direction of the great brick house which stood on the edge of the orchard. Crouched in a furrow he would gaze upward at us so steadily and for so long a time without so much as a wink or a blink of his green eyes, that it seemed he must injure its muscles. Aside from the many frights he gave us it is sad to relate that he succeeded before many days in getting away with one of our number. One morning he crept softly up to a young robin which had flown down in the grass, but had not sufficient power to rise quickly, and before the unsuspecting little creature

realized its danger, the cat arched his back, gave a spring, and seized it. A moment later he softly trotted out of the orchard with the poor bird in his mouth and doubtless made a dainty dinner in the barn off our unfortunate comrade. This incident cast a deep gloom over us, and our songs for many days held a mournful note.

But while cats were unwelcome visitors from the great brick house, we sometimes had others whom we were always glad to see. The two young ladies of the family, together with their mother and little niece, occasionally came out for a saunter under the trees, and it was very delightful to listen to their merry chat. So affectionate toward each other, so gentle and withal so bright and lively, they seemed to bring a streak of sunshine with them whenever they came. Miss Dorothy, who was tall and stately, seldom sat on the grassy tufts which rose like little footstools at the base of each tree, but rambled about while talking. This was perhaps because she disliked to rumple her beautifully starched skirts. But Miss Katie—impetuous, dim-

THE INDIGO BIRD

ple-cheeked Katie, would fling herself down anywhere regardless of edged ruffles or floating sash ribbons.

"For it is clean dirt," she laughingly said, when Miss Dorothy playfully scolded her for it. "This kind of dirt is healthful, and it isn't going to hurt me if a few dusty twigs or a bit of dried grass or weeds should cling to my gown. You must remember, Sister Dorothy, there are different kinds of dirt. I haven't any respect for grease spots or for clothes soiled from wearing them too long. I don't like that kind of dirt, but to get close to dear old mother earth, and have a scent of her fresh soil once in a while is what I enjoy. It is delightful. I like nature too well to stand on ceremony with her."

"You like butterflies too, don't you, aunty?" asked little Marian.

"To be sure I do, dear. I love all the pretty things that fly."

"And the birdies too?" asked the child.

"Yes, indeed; I love the birds the best of all."

"And the old cat was awful naughty when he caught the baby robin the other day and ate it up. Wasn't he, aunty?"

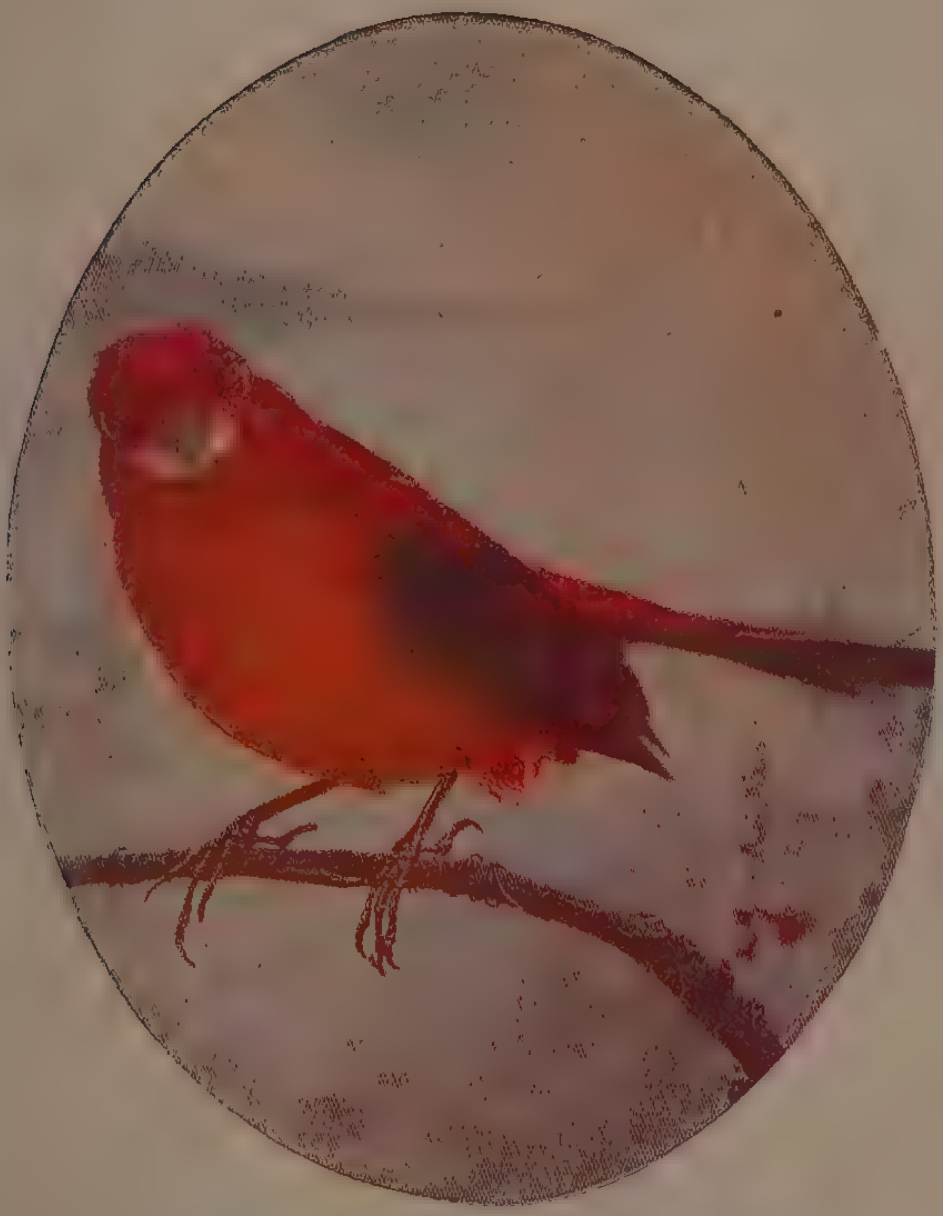
"Yes. Tom is a cruel, bad, bad cat," responded Miss Katie, as she squeezed Marian's little pink hand between her own palms. "That naughty puss gets plenty to eat in the house and there are lots of nice fat mice in the barn, and yet he slips slyly out to the orchard and takes the life of a poor, innocent little bird."

"And it made the mamma-bird cry because her little one was dead," added Miss Dorothy, who had drawn near.

Little Marian heaved a deep sigh and her rosy lips trembled suspiciously. "Poor mamma-bird! It can never have its baby bird any more," she said, with a sob of sympathy. "Don't you feel sorry for it, Aunt Dorothy?"

"Yes, dear. I feel very sorry for it."

"And I expect the poor mamma-bird cries and cries and weeps and grieves when she comes home to supper and finds out her little children are gone forever and ever." And with her bright eyes dimmed



THE SCARLET TANAGER

with tears of pity, Marian, clasping a hand of each of the young ladies, walked slowly to the house still bewailing the fate of the robin.

My heart warmed toward these sweet young girls for their tender sympathy. I almost wished I were a carrier pigeon, that I might devote myself hereafter to their service by bearing loving messages from them to their friends.

But, alas! I was to have a rude awakening from this pleasant thought. As we flew that evening to our roosting-place, I observed to my mother that if there were no cats in the world what a delightful time we birds might have.

"You have a greater enemy than the cat," she responded sadly. "It is true the cat is cruel and tries to kill us, but it knows no better."

"If not the cat, what enemy is it?" I asked in surprise. "I thought the cat was the most bloodthirsty foe the birds had."

My mother dipped her wings more slowly and poised her body gracefully a moment. Then she said impressively, "Our greatest

enemy is man. No," suddenly correcting herself, "not man, but women, women and children."

"Women and dear little children our enemies?" said I, in astonishment. "The pretty ladies who speak so sweet and kind! The pretty ladies who gather roses in the garden! Would they deprive us of life?"

My mother nodded.

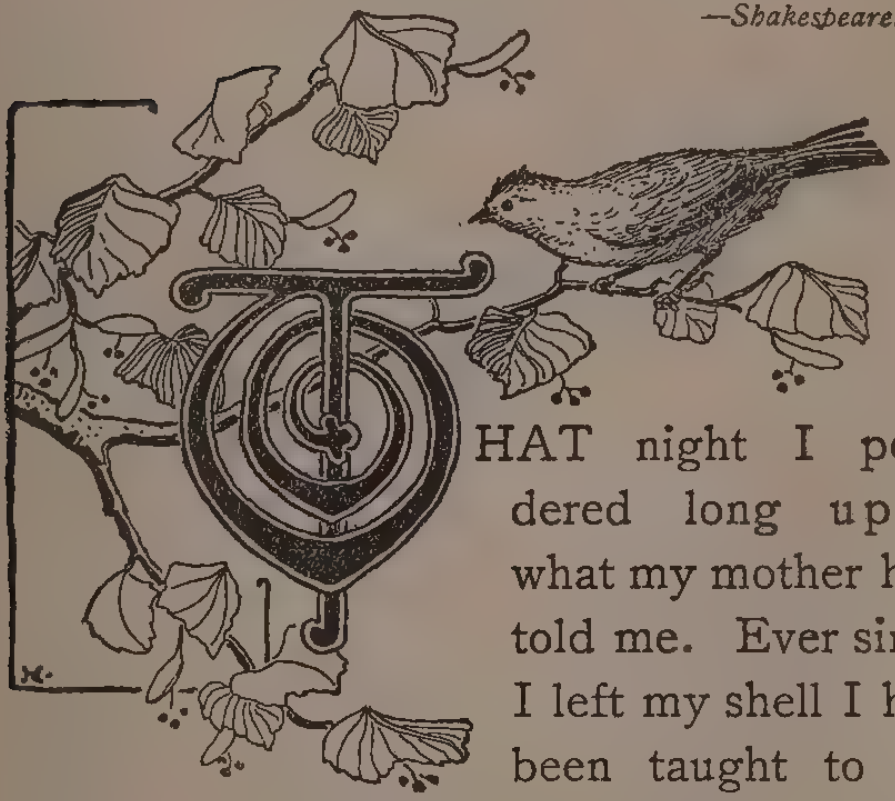
"Yes," she answered, "the pretty ladies, the wicked ladies."

CHAPTER II

DICKEY DOWNY'S MEDITATION

It hath the excuse of youth.

—*Shakespeare.*



THAT night I pondered long upon what my mother had told me. Ever since I left my shell I had been taught to respect my elders, and that it was a mark of ill manners and bad breeding for children to question the superior knowledge of those much older than themselves. Notwithstanding this, in my secret heart I could not help thinking that my mother was mis-

taken in her estimate of women when she called them wicked. She had surely misjudged them. However, I took good care not to mention these doubts to her.

I had heard from my grandmother, who had traveled a great deal from the tropics to the North and back again, that women were the leaders in the churches and were foremost in all Christian and philanthropic work; that they provided beautiful homes for orphan children, where they took care of them and nursed them when they were sick. She told me about the hospitals where diseased and aged people were kindly cared for by them. She said they were active in the societies for the prevention of cruelty to children and to animals. They fed armies of tramps out of sheer pity; even the debauched drunkard was the object of their tenderest care and their earnest prayers. They held out a friendly hand to the prisoners in the jails and sent them flowers and Bibles; they pitied and cheered the outcast with kind words. They offered themselves as missionaries for foreign lands to convert the heathen and bring

them to Christ. They soothed the sick and made easy the last days of the dying.

On the battlefield, when blood was flowing and cannon smoking, my grandmother had seen the Red Cross women like angels of mercy binding up the gaping wounds and gently closing the glazed eyes of the expiring soldier. In woman's ear was poured his last message to his loved ones far away, and when death was near it was woman who spoke the words of consolation and her finger that pointed hopefully to the stars.

Did not all this prove her to be sweet and tender and loving and gentle and kind? Yes—a thousand times yes.

My grandmother once had her nest near a cemetery, and often related pathetic incidents which had come under her observation at that time. One in particular I now recalled. It was of a woman who came every day to weep over the mound where her babe was buried. She was worn to a shadow from her long watching through its illness, and when it was taken from her, her grief was deep. The bright

world was no longer bright since she was bereft of her darling, and her moans for the lost loved one were heartrending.

This incident was only yet another instance of the tenderness of woman's nature, and I could not reconcile it with what my mother had told me.

"No, no," I repeated as I cuddled my head under my wing, "never can I believe that woman, tender-hearted woman, who is all love and mercy, all gentleness and pity, never can I believe she is our enemy." And resolving to ask my mother to more fully explain her unjust assertion I fell asleep.

But a source of fresh anxiety arose which for a time caused me to forget the matter.

The lindens which fringed the wood were now in full leafage, adorned with their delicate ball-like tassels, and hosts of birds flitted among them daily. Many of them were of the kind frequently known as indigo birds, smaller than the ordinary bluebird. In color they were of the metallic cast of blue which has a sheen dis-

tinct from the rich shade seen on the jay's wings or the brilliance of the bluebird. Flashing in and out among the hanging blossoms their beautiful blue coats made them an easy target for the boys who attended the neighborhood country school.

To bring down a sweet songster with a shower of stones, panting and bleeding to the ground, they thought was the best sport in the world, and the woods rang and echoed with their whoops and cheers as each poor bird fell to the earth. A mere glimpse of one of the blue beauties as he hid among the leaves seemed to fire these cruel children with a wish to kill it.

One half-grown boy, who went by the name of Big Bill, was noticeable for his brutality. He encouraged the others in cruelties which they might not have thought of, for such is the force of evil example and companionship. A distinguishing mark was a large scar on his cheek, probably inflicted by some enraged animal while being tortured by him. I always felt sure Big Bill would come to some bad end. My mother said that a cruel childhood was

often a training school for the gallows, and the boy who killed defenseless birds and bugs deadened his sensibilities and destroyed his moral nature so that it was easy to commit greater crimes.

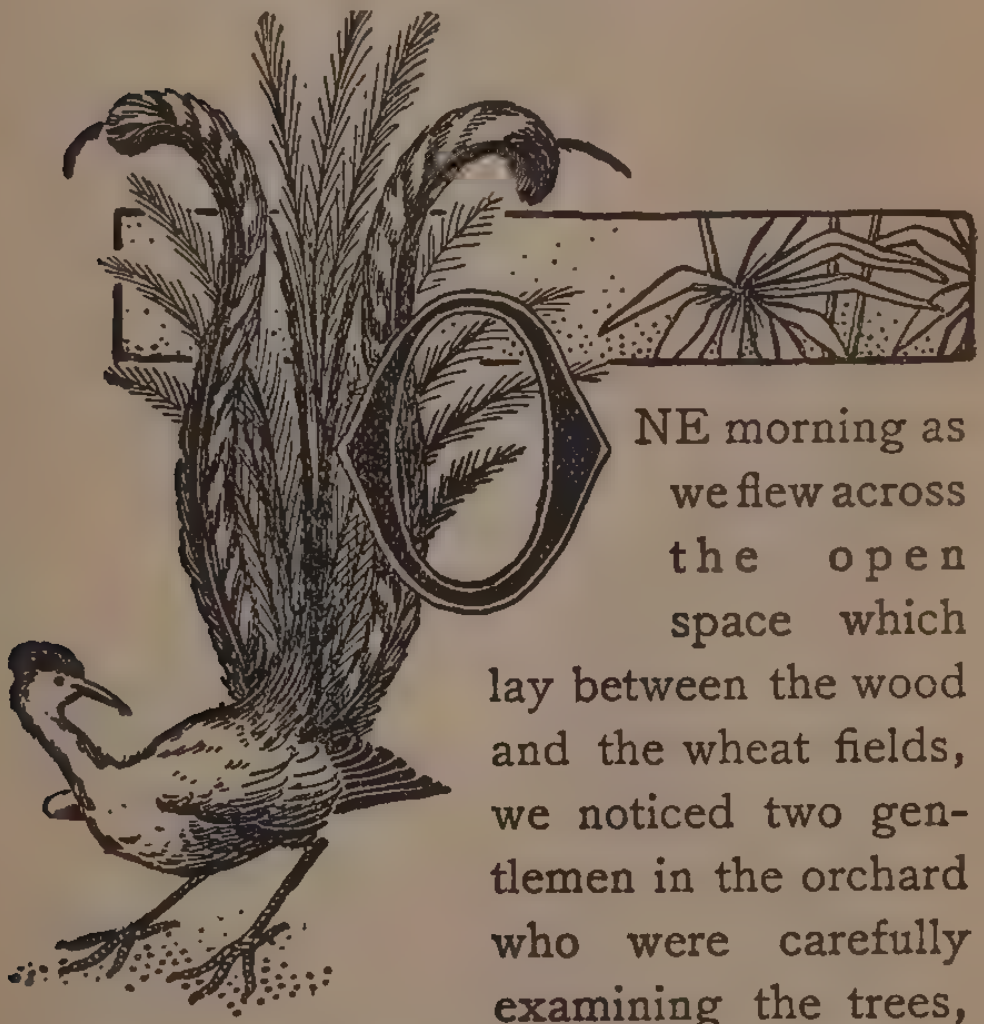
So dreadful became the persecutions of the schoolboys that the indigo birds finally held a council and determined to leave that part of the country and settle far from the habitations of men, where they might live unmolested and free from persecutions.

CHAPTER III

THE RULER WITH THE IRON HAND

But evil is wrought by want of thought
As well as want of heart.

—*Hood.*



ONE morning as we flew across the open space which lay between the wood and the wheat fields, we noticed two gentlemen in the orchard who were carefully examining the trees, peering curiously into the cracks of the rough bark or unfolding the curled leaves.

As we came nearer we discovered that one of them was the owner of the place, the father of Miss Dorothy and Miss Katie. The other was a thin gentleman in spectacles, who held a magnifying glass through which he intently looked at a twig which he had broken off.

After a few minutes' inspection he said: "Colonel, your orchard is somewhat affected. This is a specimen of the *chionaspis furfuris*."

"Is it anything like the scurfy-bark louse?" inquired the colonel.

"The same thing exactly. It occurs more commonly in the apple, but it infects the pear and peach trees. You will find it on the mountain ash, and sometimes on the currant bushes," he answered.

The colonel asked him if he would recommend spraying to get rid of the pests, and was advised to begin immediately, using tobacco water or whale-oil soap.

"By the way," said the colonel, "there is a beetle attacking my shade trees. They are ruining that fine row of elms in front of the lawn."

"It is undoubtedly the *melolontha vulgaris*," said the professor. I designate him in this way because he used such large words we did not understand. My mother told us that she was positive he was president of a college. "The *melolontha vulgaris* is the most destructive of beetles, but the larvæ are still more injurious. They do incalculable damage to the farmer. Fortunately enormous numbers of these grubs are eaten by the birds."

"Unfortunately the birds are not so numerous as they used to be. They are being destroyed so rapidly, more's the pity! These grounds and woods yonder were formerly alive with birds of all kinds. Flocks of the purple grakle used to follow the plow and eat up the worms at a great rate. You are familiar with their habits? You know they are most devoted parents. I have often watched them feeding their young. The little ones have such astonishingly good appetites that it keeps the old folks busy to supply them with enough to eat. They work like beavers as long as daylight lasts, going to and from the fields

carrying on each return trip a fat grub or a toothsome grasshopper."

"I am a great lover of birds," returned the professor enthusiastically, "and I find them very interesting subjects of study. By the way, I was reading the other day a little incident connected with one of America's great men which impressed me deeply. The story goes that he was one day walking in company with some noted statesmen, busily engaged in conversation. But he was not too much occupied to notice that a young bird had fallen from its nest near the path where they were walking. He stopped short and crossing over to where the bird was lying, tenderly picked it up and put it back into its nest. There was a gentleman of a noble nature! No wonder that man was a leader and a liberator!"

"Who was he?"

"The grand, the great Abraham Lincoln," responded the professor impressively.

"Well, he'd be the very one to do just such a kind deed as that," was the colonel's

hearty response. "No man ever lived who had a bigger, more merciful heart than 'Honest Abe.'"

For myself I did not know who Abraham Lincoln was. I had never heard the name before, but I was quite sure from the proud tone of the professor's voice that he was a distinguished man, as I was equally sure from the story of his pity for the helpless bird, that he was a good man.

"You mentioned the industry of the grakle a moment ago," resumed the professor. "Do you know that the redwing is equally as useful, and besides he is a delightful singer?

"The redwing flutes his o-ka-lee.

Do you remember that line, colonel?" and the professor softly whistled a strain in imitation of a bird's note. "The services of our little brothers of the air are exceedingly valuable to the horticulturist. And think of the damage done to arboriculture by the woodborers alone were it not for the help given by the birds. Did you ever notice those borers at work,

colonel? Some writer has well described them as animated gimlets. They just stick their pointed heads into the bark and turn their bodies around and around and out pours a little stream of sawdust. The birds would pick off such pests fast enough if people would only give them a chance and not scare them off with shotguns."

"Yes, the birds earn their way, there is no denying it, and he is a very stupid farmer who begrudges them the little corn and wheat they take from the fields. The account is more than balanced by the good they do." Then the conversation ceased, for the colonel and his friend moved off to inspect the quince bushes.

Pleased by the praises they had bestowed on us for our efforts in cleaning the fruit trees and cornfields of injurious insects, I went to work with new vigor to get out some bugs for my luncheon, and was thus pleasantly employed when a sharp twitter from my mother attracted my attention.

"Look, children!" she exclaimed. "Here come our young ladies with some company from the city. Be careful to

notice what they have on their heads and then tell me what you think of our sweet, pretty ladies."

One of my brothers was swaying lightly on a little swing below me. I flew down hastily and placed myself on the next bough, where I could also get a good view of the ladies as they strolled toward us. They were in a very merry mood and each one seemed striving to say something more amusing than her companions. Miss Dorothy led the way, her arm linked in that of one of the stranger guests. Then followed the others with Miss Katie and Marian hand in hand in the rear. They were all very handsomely dressed, and having just returned from a drive had not yet removed their hats.

As they came under the tree where we were perched, which was a favorite spot with Miss Katie, they halted for some time and consequently I had an excellent opportunity to look, as my mother had bidden me.

And what did I see?

I saw six ladies' hats trimmed with dead

birds. Fastened on sidewise, head downward, on one was a magnificent scarlet tanager, his body half concealed by folds of tulle, his fixed eye staring into vacancy. On another was the head and breast of a beautiful yellow-hammer; it was surmounted by the tall sweeping plumes of the egret, which this bird produces only at breeding time. Oh, how much joy and beauty the world had lost by that cruel deed! A third hat had two song sparrows imprisoned in meshes of star-studded lace. Their blithesome carol had been rudely silenced, their cheer to the world cut short, simply that they might be used for hat trimming. Of the remaining ones some were as yet unknown to me, but my mother, who had an extensive acquaintance with foreign birds, said that in that strange murderous mixture of millinery, far-away Australia had furnished the filmy feathers of the lyre bird which swept upward from a knot of ribbons, and that the forests of Germany had contributed the pretty green linnet. Dove's wings and the rosy breast of the grosbeak completed the barbarous display.

How my heart sickened as I gazed at these pleasant, refined, soft-voiced women flaunting the trophies of their cruelty in the beautiful sunlight.

Had they no compassion for the feathered mother who had been robbed of her young for the sake of a hat?

"Oh, how can they do such dreadful, such wicked things!" I moaned. My mother heard my lament and signaled for us to come up where she was perching.

"You see now who are our worst enemies," said she. "The cat preys on us to satisfy his bodily hunger, but women have no such excuse. We are not slaughtered to sustain their lives but to minister to their vanity. For years the women of Christian lands have waged their unholy war against us. We have been driven from our old haunts and forced to seek new places. We have been shot down by thousands every season until now many species are destroyed from the face of the earth. There is no security for us in any place. The hunter with his gun penetrates into the deepest forests, he perils his life

in scaling the most dangerous cliffs, he wades through bog and marsh and mud and tracks us to our feeding grounds to surprise us with the deadly shot, and kills the mother hovering over the nest of her helpless offspring with as little compunction as if she were a poisonous reptile instead of a melodious joy-giver. And all this horrible slaughter is for women."

I grew feverish with excitement at this terrible arraignment of the "gentler sex." "But why are they so cruel? Why do they do this wicked thing?" I asked.

"For the sake of Fashion," said my mother.

"Fashion, what is that?"

My mother was very patient with me, so when I asked questions she did not put me off by telling me she didn't know, or advise me to fly away and play, or tell me she was busy and couldn't be bothered just then, therefore she now took pains to make me understand.

"You ask me what is Fashion," she began. "Well, Fashion is an exacting ruler, a great, tyrannical god who has

many, many worshipers, and these he rules with an iron hand. His followers cannot be induced to do anything contrary to his wishes. He sits on a high throne from which he dictates to his slaves what they must do. Often they do the most outrageous things, not because they like to, but because he demands it. He is constantly laying down new laws for their guidance, and some of these laws are so unreasonable and absurd that a part of his followers frequently threaten to rebel. They do not hold out against him long, for he manages to make it quite unpleasant for those who disobey him or refuse to come under his yoke."

"Has he any men slaves?" asked my brother.

"Yes, he has some slaves among men, but the larger number of those who wear his most galling fetters are women. If he but crooks his little finger these bondwomen rush pell-mell in the direction he points. They are thus keen to do his bidding, because each woman who is the first to carry out his rules in her own particular

town or neighborhood acquires great distinction in the eyes of the other worshipers."

"His slaves are nearly always rich women, aren't they?" asked my brother.

"By no means. Many of them are poor working women who have to labor hard for a living. But they will rob themselves of necessities and needed rest to get the means to follow his demands. Often it takes them a long time to do this, and perhaps just as they have accomplished the weary task he suddenly proclaims a new law, and all this toiling and drudging and stinting must begin over again. In this way the unhappy creatures have never a breathing spell. It is utterly impossible for them to conform to the new law when it is first proclaimed by the god, and so they are always struggling to keep up. Their chains are never lifted or lightened a particle."

"If the chain is so heavy why don't they break it?" I asked impatiently.

"Because they are afraid," she replied.

"Afraid of the god?"

"No, no, child, they are afraid of each other. They are afraid the richer slaves, who are able to comply with the demands will laugh at them and ridicule them, and that is why they strain every nerve to follow the god's wishes. A slave, whether she is rich or poor, grows more cringing year by year, until at last she loses all her individuality, and becomes a mere echo of the god."

"What about the slaves who rebel at first and afterward yield?"

"Oh, they denounce the god very severely when he lays down some new law they don't happen to like, but as all the other slaves are obediently complying with it they dislike to be set off by themselves as different, and so they reluctantly give in after a time. Sometimes they try to compromise with the god by going halfway."

I inquired what the other slaves thought of that.

"They mildly tolerate them," said she. "Sometimes they look askance at them when they meet, and try to show their su-

periority as being obedient, full-blooded, genuine slaves, while the others are only lukewarm servants of the monarch!"

I wondered how the slaves regarded the woman who was independent and wouldn't worship the god.

My mother twittered softly at my question, and I knew she was smiling to herself. "Why," said she, "they call that kind of a woman a crank—whatever that is."

It was very evident that this god Fashion was a cruel tyrant, and it was clearly through his influence that we were killed, and I so told my mother. She looked very sorrowful as she replied:

"Yes, the women do not hate us. They do not dislike to hear our pretty songs; they have no revenge to gratify; but the god orders them to have us killed, and they do it. He tells them that to wear our poor mutilated dead bodies will add to their appearance, and so we are sacrificed on the altar of their vanity and silly pride. As members of humane societies women have denounced the docking of horses' tails as

cruel, but from what I know of woman's indifference to the sufferings of the innocent birds, I venture to assert that were Fashion to say that she should trim her cloak with horse tails there would not be left an undocked horse in the country."

I knew my mother was very excited or she would never have been so vehement.

"Just hear how those birds twitter," remarked one of the ladies, looking up into our tree. "One would think they were holding an indignation meeting over something."

"Yes, the dear little things; I love to hear them chirp," commented Miss Katie, turning a sweet glance toward us, and then the party moved to go and we saw the six hats loaded with their mournful freight file off to the house. We followed the retreating hats with sad eyes till they were lost to view.

My brother broke the silence by asking, "Are there any Christian women who wear birds, and are among the god's worshipers?"

My mother's manner grew very grave

and solemn. "That is not for me to say," she replied. "They know whether they are guiltless of our wholesale slaughter, and they know too, how the gentle, merciful Christ regarded us when he declared that 'not a sparrow is forgotten before God.'"

CHAPTER IV

DICKEY'S COUSINS

Another of my airy creatures breathes such sweet music out of her little instrumental throat that it might make mankind to think that miracles are not ceased. We might well be lifted up above the earth and say, Lord, what music hast thou provided for the saints in heaven, when thou affordest bad men such music on earth?—*Izaak Walton.*

THE fine pasture adjoining was a popular resort for some handsome birds that often visited it as a playground. They were said to be relatives of ours, but I do not think they were closer than seventh or eighth cousins, which

is so distant that it doesn't count—especially if one doesn't want it to.

All I know is that their family name was the same as ours, *Icteridæ*, and means something or other, I forget what. It was a good honorable name, however, and our branch was as proud of our ancestry as any Daughter of the American Revolution could possibly be.

There were some tall weeds growing along the margin of a little stream in the pasture which produced quantities of delicious seeds, and to these we often repaired when we wanted a choice breakfast, as well as to watch the playful pastimes of these queer bipeds.

What would you think of a bird taking a bareback ride on a cow? They were extremely fond of settling themselves on the cattle which browsed in the field and presented a truly comical picture as they complacently gathered in little groups on the backs of those huge animals. Moving slowly along munching the dewy grass, first on one side, then on the other, the cows did not seem particularly to mind

their saucy bareback riders. Occasionally they would toss their heads backward, when up all the birds would fly into the air only to descend again as soon as the cattle were quiet.

As I said, they were very handsome. At a short distance they looked to be clothed in black, but the breast and neck were really a very rich brown, with the rest of the body like jet and as lustrous as satin. They were not general favorites with the other birds on account of some dishonorable tricks which they did on the sly. For instance, they never troubled themselves to make nests, but watched their chance to sneak in and lay their eggs, only one in a place, in the nests of other birds. For some reason their eggs always hatch a little sooner than the eggs rightfully belonging there, consequently the foster-parents, not knowing of the deception, are quite delighted with the first little one that comes out of the shell, and immediately fly off to get food for it. This is very unfortunate, for during their absence their own eggs get cold and will not hatch. After a

time the old birds grow disgusted and tumble the poor eggs all out of the nest and bestow their whole attention to the juvenile cowbird, entirely ignorant of the fact that they are the victims of a "put-up job."

Once when we were dining in the pasture we found out the cause of the booming noise we had often heard sounding through the woods. Two men, each carrying in his hand a long club, shaped large at one end, appeared in the meadow and began looking among the long grasses which sheltered the nests of some meadow larks. A number of the larks were on the wing, others sat on the rail fence rolling out cadenzas in concert in a gush of melody from their downy throats. The men moved cautiously nearer under cover of the weeds. Raising their long clubs to their shoulders they gazed along their narrow points a moment. Without exactly knowing why, we took alarm, and larks, bobolinks, and cowbirds sped upward like the wind. At the same instant something bright shimmered in the sunlight, and with it a horrid

burst of noise and a puff of smoke. We did not all get away, for some of the beautiful larks fell to the ground pierced by the sportsman's deadly hail.

Again and again, all through that long, sad day we heard the ominous booming crash, and knew the savage work of killing was going on.

Among our acquaintances was a lame redbird who at one time had been trapped and made a prisoner, confined behind the bars of a wire cell for many weeks and months. Luckily he made his escape one day when his grated door was accidentally opened, and he speedily made his way back to his dearly loved forest.

During the period of his imprisonment in the city he had picked up a great deal of information regarding the bird trade, and some of the facts recited by him of the terrible cruelties perpetrated and the carnage which had been going on for years, almost caused our feathers to stand upright in horror as we listened.

CHAPTER V

"DON'T, JOHNNY"

Farewell happy fields, where joy forever dwells.

—Milton.

A VERY pleasant, sociable fellow was this redbird, and often when on hot afternoons we were hiding in the treetops from the rays of the sun he told us stories and anecdotes about the people he had seen while he lived in the city.

He and his brother had been caught in a trap in the woods set by a farmer's boy.

One cold spring morning when the boy came to look at his trap he was overjoyed to find he had snared two redbirds, and forthwith carried them to the village near-by and sold them to the grocer for five cents apiece, which sum he said he was going to invest in a rubber ball.

As he put the dime into his coat pocket he told the man that one of the birds was named Admiral Dewey and the other Napoleon Bonaparte. The groceryman agreed that these names were good enough names for anybody, but he thought he'd change Bonaparte's name to Teddy Roosevelt, as being easier to pronounce, and the two birds were accordingly given these titles then and there. Not having any cage at hand to put them in, the man thought that for a few days the new-comers could share the quarters of an old sparrow he had in the rear end of the store until an extra cage could be procured.

But alas for Teddy Roosevelt! The very first night he was ignominiously whipped by the spiteful occupant of the cage, who resented having these country

visitors thrust into his house without his leave. Poor Teddy died the next day. Admiral Dewey stood the battle better than his unfortunate friend, but he too was pecked at in a way so threatening that the groceryman concluded it would be wise to get rid of him immediately. Because the admiral had not defended himself better from his pet's attack, the grocer regarded him with some disgust.

"Being as there was two of you and only one of the sparrow, 'pears as if you hadn't much grit," he said. "I would better take your high-soundin' name away from you and call you something else besides Dewey, if you can't fight."

For all the man's censure, the redbird knew that if Teddy Roosevelt had killed the sparrow instead of being killed by it, the grocer would have been much more grieved at the loss, for he had heard him say the sparrow was like one of his family. The man forgot that the result might have been different if the redbirds had been older.

Having decided to dispose of the admi-

ral, the grocer, who had an errand in the city the next day, carried the bird with him. He knew of a probable customer for it in a gentleman named Morris, who had been advertising in the papers for a redbird. He soon found the street and number where was located the gentleman's office, at which the advertisement was to be answered, and displayed the admiral.

"Your bird looks kind of ragged, as though he hadn't been treated well," said Mr. Morris, as he examined the scarlet plumage. "My boy wants a redbird, and I promised him one if he would get the highest grade in arithmetic in his class this term and he did it, so of course I must keep my word. What d'ye ask for this bird?"

"He'd be cheap at five dollars," answered the groceryman. "A nice redbird is hard to get, and they're powerful nice singers, but bein' as it's for your boy that has earned it by studying his lessons so good—I always like a boy that is fond of his books—you can have it for two dollars and a quarter."

As he had paid but five cents for it this advance in price would be a fine business speculation. After a little further talk, Mr. Morris counted out the money, and the man went back to his home doubtless wishing he had a hundred more redbirds to sell at the same handsome profit. After he had gone, Mr. Morris went to a box hanging against the wall, and turning a handle began talking to the box as if it were a human being. Though it was just a plain wooden box, the admiral said there was something mysterious about it, for Mr. Morris actually seemed to be carrying on a conversation with it, though the bird could not hear what the box answered, but he felt sure it talked back.

Mr. Morris' residence was a fine stone house with wide porches and sunny bay windows, over which were trained graceful creeping vines. A boy of about eleven years of age and a very pretty lady stood arm in arm on the broad steps leading up to the front entrance that evening when Mr. Morris and the admiral arrived. They were Johnny Morris and his mother, who

had already learned that Mr. Morris had bought the bird and would bring it when he came to dinner. The admiral discovered the next day that Mrs. Morris owned a box like the one at the office, into which she talked, and that it was called a telephone. He often mentioned this mysterious box as one of the most remarkable things he saw during his stay among men.

Johnny Morris capered and danced and jumped so hard in the exuberance of his joy at receiving the redbird that all the way to the sitting room his mother was coaxing him to be quiet.

"Don't act so foolishly," she begged; but he only capered and kicked up his heels still harder. When the cage was placed on a stand in the bay window he pranced around it, whistled and chirped, threw the bottom of the cage floor full of seed and splashed the water about so recklessly in his attempts to be friendly as nearly to frighten the poor admiral to pieces.

"Now, Johnny, don't," pleaded his mother.

"Johnny, don't do that," commanded his father every few minutes.

It was a constant "Don't, Johnny, do this" and "Don't, Johnny, do that," until, the admiral said, the conversation was so mixed up with "Don't-Johnny's" as made it almost unintelligible. Of course these expostulations made not a bit of impression on Johnny Morris. To be sure, he might stop for the moment, but the next second he was doing something else which brought a fresh round of "Don't-Johnny's" from each parent.

He was such a generous, affectionate, pretty boy, with his rosy cheeks and wavy yellow hair, it was a great pity that he should keep a whole household in a state of constant commotion by his habit of not promptly minding when he was spoken to. His father and mother were very indulgent to him, and the admiral believed he had every kind of a toy known to the boy world. He also had a machine to ride on, which they called a "wheel." On this he went out occasionally, although Mrs. Morris declared she never felt at ease a

minute while he was gone, because he never came back at the hour he promised he would. Besides this, he had a dear little pony, named Jock, on whose back he often cantered about the big park. Frequently from the bay window the admiral watched him as he mounted Jock and rode away, while his mother stood on the house step and called after him as long as he was in sight: "Don't ride in that reckless way, Johnny; you'll tumble off," or "Don't, Johnny; the pony will throw you," at which Johnny would laugh and make the pony go faster.

Among the boy's other possessions was a parrot, which the admiral asserted was the smartest bird in the world. She was a highly educated parrot, and much time had been spent on her training, and she was usually very willing to show off to company all her various accomplishments. Occasionally she assumed an air of offended dignity when asked to display her talents, and no amount of threats or coaxing could change her purpose. At such times she impatiently flapped her wings

and croaked "No, no" in her harshest tones.

Her favorite retreat when her temper was ruffled was on the back of an arm-chair, where she would sit with her bill in the air and her head cocked disdainfully on one side, pretending not to hear or see any one. In her affable moods, however, no one could be more complaisant and entertaining than Bessie.

Her name was an uncommon one for a parrot. Strangers usually accosted her as Polly, at which mistake she was greatly displeased.

"No, no—not Polly; call me Bessie," she would scream, so angrily that it always made people laugh, which angered her still more.

Bessie could sing a verse of an old-time song, at least she thought she could. The admiral said nothing could have induced him to sing for company if his voice had been as harsh and cracked as hers, but he said it was a fact that everybody seemed to enjoy her noise more than his music; that when she took up her position on top

of the piano to sing, they crowded around and called her "nice Bessie," "nice lady," and praised her, and gave her bits of sugar, as if she were the finest singer in the world. The admiral thought they showed very poor taste, for her music was simply horrid and couldn't compare with the warblings of the woods birds. It is well, however, to make allowance for the admiral's opinion, for musicians are proverbially jealous of each other.

The song the parrot sang was "Listen to the Mocking Bird," to which Mrs. Morris played a little gliding accompaniment on the piano. Great hand-clappings always followed the performance. These Bessie accepted with an air of studied indifference. But if for the purpose of teasing her they did not applaud her performance, she shrilly screamed: "Bessie's a good bird, a good bird I tell you," raising her voice higher and higher at each repetition.

Then she would wait a moment for some one to assure her that she was indeed a very good bird, quite the smartest bird

that ever breathed. But if these soothing assurances were not quickly forthcoming, she would retire to the back of her favorite chair and, elevating her bill to show her disdain, sulk in silence.

"Did she like you?" I asked the admiral one day when he was telling us about her funny tricks.

"No, she was a little bit jealous of me; yet she was not unfriendly, except when Johnny or some other member of the family paid me attention. She always wanted to be the center of attraction herself, which showed she was a vain creature. No matter how silent she had been or how firmly she might have refused to talk only the minute before, if Johnny came to my cage and called, 'Hello, Admiral! you're a daisy,' Bessie immediately struck up such a chattering as would almost deafen one.

"'Johnny dear, open my cage. I want to take a walk,' she would say in her most coaxing manner. If she happened to be already out of her cage and walking about the room, she endeavored to get him

to leave me by saying: 'Here, Johnny, boy, put me on your finger. Kiss poor Bessie—p-o-o-r Bessie.'

"Mrs. Morris used to laugh at these schemes of the parrot to attract notice, and said Bessie reminded her of some people she had met who always wanted to monopolize the conversation."

"Monopolize?" said I. "That's a large word. I don't know the meaning of it."

"Well, I think it means getting the most of anything and crowding other people out," replied the admiral; "and it was true in Bessie's case, for she always wanted the most attention. A gentleman friend of the Morrises had this habit too. He had been a general in a war that took place in the South a good many years ago, and was often entertained at dinner at the Morrises'. Though he was a well-informed, genial man, he was almost rude in making himself heard, so determined was he that people should listen to his jokes and stories, which were generally something about himself. At a large tableful of

guests, General Peterson's voice was always heard above that of every one else. He seemed to compel the rest of the company to listen. His big voice drowned the others out. Though Mr. and Mrs. Morris liked him very much, when they were alone they often ridiculed this disagreeable habit.

"'Bessie and General Peterson are just alike,' Mrs. Morris used to say jokingly, when the parrot pushed herself into notice by her loud jabbering. 'Neither of them can endure to have any one else receive attention when they are present.'

"Although Bessie had not a pony to ride on as Johnny had, she took a great many jaunts around the parlors on the cat's back. This cat was a great pet in the house. A very striking-looking cat he was too. He was jet black with a flat face and long white whiskers. Johnny always said he resembled an old colored man who used to be their coachman, and he wondered if they were any relation to each other.

"When Bessie was out of her cage the

cat did not often visit the parlor, because he was afraid of her. He always appeared to be much relieved when she did not notice him. If she had decided to take a ride, however, he never was quick enough to get away from her. With a shrill laugh of triumph she would fly upon his back, and holding on by digging her claws into his fur, around and around the room they would go, the poor cat feeling so completely disgraced that he dragged his body lower and lower at every step, until his legs could scarcely be seen at all.

"Bessie enjoyed it greatly. She seemed to take a wicked satisfaction in making poor Jett ridiculous, and laughed and chuckled and scolded till the cat looked as if he were ready to drop from very shame. Urging him on with, 'Get up, get up, you lazy thing,' she refused to be shaken off till his body was actually dragging on the floor, a sign of his complete humiliation. As soon as he threw off his unwelcome burden, Jett always ran away to hide. With his tail slinking, his ears drooping, and crawling rather than walking, he was

the most abject-looking, miserable cat in existence. Bessie meanwhile flirted herself saucily and chuckled with the conscious air of having done a very smart thing."

CHAPTER VI

THE PARROT AT A PARTY

A parrot there I saw, with gaudy pride
Of painted plumes, that hopped from side to side.

"HOW did you happen to get away from the Morrises?" asked my brother.

The red-bird laughed heartily, as if the recollection were exceedingly amusing.

"Well," said he, "it all came about through Johnny's having a tea party. For months he had been coaxing and begging his mother to invite his schoolfellows to

the house and entertain them with games and plays and music, ending with a fine supper. Early in the spring when he began talking of it, it was too cold, his mother said. Then after a while it was too rainy, or too warm, or they were house-cleaning, or something, and so she kept putting him off from one time to another, hoping by deferring it to make him forget it. The Morrises always spent the month of August at their seaside cottage, and the night before they left home, Johnny tried to get Mrs. Morris to promise that he might have the party the very first thing on their return.

"'I'll think about it, my dear,' she answered.

"'Whenever you say you'll think about it then I'm pretty sure not to get what I want,' sighed Johnny.

"His mother seemed to be much amused at this statement. 'Oh, no, my son, it doesn't always turn out that way; but you know it wouldn't do for me to promise to have it just as soon as we get back,' she objected. 'I am always very busy just at

our return. It might be very inconvenient for me to prepare for a children's evening at that time; but when I am ready I shall take pleasure in getting up a nice party for you sometime in the autumn.'

"This sounded well, but it was not definite enough to suit Johnny. However he said no more at that time. While the family were gone Bessie and I had the back porch to ourselves, and no one being there except the housemaid to whom she could display her superiority over me, she grew to be quite agreeable. For some time before the Morrises had bought her, which was years and years before, long before Johnny was born, she had lived in a taxidermist's shop. The owner of the shop was also a bird dealer in a small way. On account of her accomplishments he had held her at a price that few were willing or able to pay, and so she had been forced to stay with him a long time. She much preferred being owned by a refined family to living in a dingy store, for she was a bird of luxurious tastes, she said.

"I too had never ceased being glad

that the grocer had sold me to the Morrises, for I was sure that life would not have been so comfortable for me in the back part of a country store, inhaling the odors from fish barrels and molasses kegs, and with the dreary outlook afforded by shelves full of canned vegetables and cracker boxes. The only point in favor of a life at the grocery was that I would have been nearer to the woods; but if I could not be in the woods, of what avail was that? The Morrises were people of elegance and refinement, and their home expressed their culture. I had made a pleasant exchange, and I felt it was wise to be as contented as possible.

"August slowly passed, and Johnny came back. The big house that had been so quiet for four weeks was suddenly wakened as from a sleep. His noisy, joyous voice rang through the halls, and from cellar to garret.

"'Bless the b'y! he's that plazed to git back, it does one's sowl good to hear him,' said the housemaid.

"Mrs. Morris was so busy for the first

day or two that she saw little of Johnny. He was sent on several errands, and took his own time in returning, but every one had too much to do to inquire what kept him so long.

"'Can't I shine up Bessie's and the admiral's cages?' he asked his mother after dinner the second day.

"Mrs. Morris was delighted with her son's thoughtfulness. 'Why, Johnny,' she said, 'I'll be so glad to have you do it.'

"So master Johnny wiped and dusted our cages till we felt very clean, although I own I did not enjoy having him work about me with his brush and dust cloth. Just as he had finished and put us back in our places the doorbell sounded, and presently we heard children's voices in the hall asking the maid if Johnny Morris was at home.

"'It is some one to see you,' said Mrs. Morris. But Johnny did not reply. He was nowhere to be seen. At the first sound he had quietly slipped out of the room and I could now see him hiding behind the curtains in the library. Soon Sarah came

ushering three or four little barefooted children into the parlor.

"'They've come to Johnny's party, ma'am,' she explained to Mrs. Morris, who looked up from her work as the children entered.

"'How do you do, my dears?' said Mrs. Morris sweetly, though I could see she was greatly surprised. 'I believe I don't know your names, so you will have to introduce yourselves.'

"The children looked bashful, and made no reply.

"'You are not Johnny Morris' schoolmates, are you?' she questioned.

"'No, ma'am,' answered the tallest girl, as she gazed about the handsome room with wide-open eyes. I could see that she was not accustomed to such beautiful things.

"'Where did you get acquainted with him, then?' went on Mrs. Morris kindly.

"'We hain't acquainted at all, ma'am; but he seed us on the street this morning, and said for us to come to his party to-day. He thought as how maybe they'd be ice-

cream to eat, and he told us where he lived, and so we are here.'

"'Well, we must try to make you have a pleasant time,' she replied. 'Sarah, please call Johnny and tell him his guests have arrived.'

"But Sarah had been answering a second peal of the bell, and now appeared with a very queer smile on her face at the head of a line of three girls and a small boy, whom she introduced by saying:

"'A few more children, ma'am, who have come to take tea with master Johnny.'

"'Why, really,' exclaimed Mrs. Morris, in a sort of flutter, as she helped Sarah to seat the new arrivals. 'The house is hardly in order for company.'

"The children appeared quite embarrassed, and ranged themselves silently and sedately on the chairs to which they had been directed.

"'Dear me, Sarah, what a predicament to be in! Where do you suppose Johnny scraped up all these youngsters? I don't know what I ought to do to him for playing me this trick.' Mrs. Morris said this

to the maid as they came to my side of the room. 'Think of all the work to be done, and which will have to be stopped for the day—the house all upside down—no chance for preparations for an extra supper for his company. And that big girl bespoke ice-cream as soon as she entered.' And then Mrs. Morris and Sarah turned into the recess of the bay window and laughed softly. Her vexation seemed to pass away in a few minutes, for she added, 'We must make the best of it, since they are here, and let everything else go. But there's the bell; I expect it's another batch of Johnny's friends.'

"And so it proved, for these were old acquaintances, eight or ten of his schoolmates. Little misses dressed in fine style, in dainty ruffled frocks and necklaces and bright hair-ribbons, tripped gracefully in and advanced to meet Mrs. Morris, quite like grown ladies in their manners. Behind them came several boys, spick and span in fresh white linen waists and silk neckties and well-fitting shoes.

"'Ah! here are Frances and Naomi

and Justice and Karl and Mary Ethel and Philip and Jessica and all the rest,' said Mrs. Morris, giving them each a hand of welcome as they gathered about her in a pretty group. 'Will you make yourselves quite at home and help me to entertain these other visitors till Johnny comes in? I don't know what keeps him so long. If you'll excuse me I'll go and look for him. There are the pictures in the portfolio that you might like to show to these little girls. And there's the admiral, our redbird, and Bessie, the parrot. Maybe they would like to look at them.'

"The two girls whom she had designated as Jessica and Frances looked at the strange children a minute but made no movement to carry out Mrs. Morris' wishes. Instead they drew a little apart and began to talk to each other. Mary Ethel, a round-faced girl who giggled a great deal behind her fan, crossed over to where sat the large girl who had mentioned the ice-cream, and started a conversation by remarking that it was a warm day. The girl made no audible answer, only nodded.

"'Do you like to go to school?' inquired Mary Ethel.

"The girl again nodded. There was a little pause. Mary Ethel, who was bent on carrying out Mrs. Morris' suggestion to help her entertain them, began again on the weather. I suppose she couldn't think of anything new to say, so she observed:

"'It's a nice warm day for the first of September, don't you think?'

"The girl's head once more wagged up and down in assent, but not a word did she utter. At this a subdued titter came from Frances and Jessica. Mary Ethel's face grew red and she frowned at them.

"Just at this moment in ran Johnny. He had put on his best suit. His yellow hair was freshly brushed and his face was wreathed in smiles. He reminded one of a dancing sunbeam. It was wonderful to see how quickly he set the social wheel moving in the parlor. In three minutes he had them all acquainted and talking to each other. At one side I noticed Naomi and Jessica who were trying to make the parrot talk for the big girl. Mary Ethel

was turning the crank of a small music box, around which were clustered a group of the stranger children. On a sofa three or four others had the portfolio of pictures spread out. Others came to my cage coaxing me to whistle for them, while Johnny capered hither and thither and joked and had more funny things to say than anybody in the room. When he let Bessie out of her cage and put her on the piano to sing the 'Mocking Bird,' the joy of the visitors knew no bounds.

"'Have you a parrot, Jeannette?' he asked one of the little barefooted girls, whose dancing black eyes showed how much she enjoyed Bessie's performance.

"'No, but I have two lovely cats.' She made the announcement as if very proud of their ownership.

"'I have a cat too. He dresses in black and wears long white whiskers, and looks just like a respectable old colored man.' This description amused the children very much.

"'What's your cat's name?' they shouted.

"'Jett. What do you call your cats, Jeannette?'

"'The big one is *Boule de Neige* and and the little one is *Jaune Jaquette*.'

"'What queer names! exclaimed Mary Ethel. 'How did you happen to select such names for them?'

"'Oh, miss, because the names do suit them so well.'

"'They don't sound like any cats' names that ever I heard. I don't understand how they would suit.' Mary Ethel looked perplexed.

"'Why, miss, on account of the color of those cats, to be sure,' said Jeannette in surprise.

"'Pooh!' explained Johnny, 'that's easy. *Boule de neige* is the French for snowball, and *jaune* means yellow, so *jaune jaquette* means yellow jacket. I learned that in our French reader. I expect one of the cats is all white and the other is a yellow one. Is that it, Jeannette?'

"'Yes, sir,' said the French child, and she tipped him a polite little bow that was very pretty indeed.

"'*Boule de Neige!* what a funny name. I haven't named our white kitten yet. I believe I'll call it *Boule de Neige* for a change,' said Karl.

"Then Jett was brought in and Bessie pounced upon him for a ride, she chuckling and singing and looking from side to side with proud satisfaction, knowing she was being observed by everybody. The children almost screamed with delight at this performance.

"'Now, Bessie,' said Johnny, as the poor cat at last shook her off and slank away. 'You did that beautifully, and you deserve something to eat. I am going to let you have some bread and milk right here in the parlor, and the company can see how nicely you can feed yourself with a spoon.'

"'All right,' croaked the parrot. Sarah brought in a saucer in which was a little bread moistened with milk, and two spoons with it. A cloth was spread over one corner of the table and Bessie crawled up to the top of a chair which had been placed with its back close to the table.

This brought the bird almost in line with the saucer. Johnny took his seat beside her and broke the bread into tiny pieces with his spoon, shoving the particles into the other spoon as fast as Bessie disposed of them. She gravely clasped her spoon with one claw and brought it to her mouth quite dextrously and ate the contents with evident relish, though it was plain that she enjoyed being admired for being able to do it really more than she enjoyed the bread. Once in a while her grasp was uncertain and the food was spilled on her breast feathers or fell to the floor. At this she scolded herself roundly and seemed quite ashamed.

"'One of these days, when I get time, I am going to train her to use a napkin when she eats,' said Johnny.

"'She'll be a perfectly accomplished lady then,' added Mary Ethel.

"By this time some of the stranger children had left the table and had come over to my cage to look at me.

"'The admiral's an awful purty feller,' said one.

"'Wouldn't his tail be sweet on a Sunday hat?' suggested another.

"'Oh, I choose his wings for my hat,' exclaimed a third.

"'I choose his head and breast for mine,' said the first one who had spoken. 'And Naomi chooses his whole body for her hat, I expect,' she added as Naomi joined them.

"'No,' said Naomi, 'we don't wear birds any more in our family. My sister and I used to have our hats trimmed with them, but we've quit. I had a lovely one on my blue velvet hat last year. It was a beautiful hat,' and she smiled at the recollection. 'But we've quit now,' she added gravely.

"'Why?' asked the other girls in a breath.

"'Oh, because my mother thinks it is wrong to wear them. Little boy, little boy, be careful or you'll let the bird out,' she called hastily.

"But the warning was too late. While the girls had been talking the small boy who was with them had been entertaining

himself by slightly opening my cage door and letting it spring back to its fastening. Suddenly he was seized with fright at discovering that it had stuck while halfway back, and refused to come together.

"'Oh, dear!' he called. 'He's out.'

"'Mercy on us! Oh, dear!' screamed the girls as I made a dash through the opening, and flew to the top of a picture frame. 'Johnny, Johnny, your redbird's out,' they called.

"All was confusion in an instant. Boys and girls ran hither and thither, tumbling over each other, and over the chairs and stools, and all talking and screaming at once.

"'Bring a broom or a flagpole, Johnny,' called Philip. 'I'll shoo him down for you while you stand underneath and catch him.'

"'Shoo, shoo!' said Jeannette, catching her dress skirt with both hands and waving it back and forth rapidly. In a minute all the girls were waving their dress skirts at me and saying 'shoo.'

"'Oh, my pretty Admiral Dewey, my

dear old admiral,' wailed Johnny, almost in tears.

"I didn't wait for the broom or the flag-pole to help me from the picture frame. I balanced myself steadily and then I flew out of the open window and away into the world, without saying good-bye to anybody. I suppose they all crowded to the window to look after me as I disappeared, for the last thing I heard was Mrs. Morris' voice saying, 'Don't, Johnny; you'll fall out if you lean over so far. Papa will get you another bird. Don't grieve so hard. Don't, Johnny.'"

"Did you ever see Johnny afterward?" we asked the redbird.

"Yes, once I saw him cantering along slowly on Jock. He could not go very fast because he was holding a great bunch of red and pink roses in one hand. His cheeks were as pink as the flowers and his yellow hair curled up under the edge of his cap the same as it used to. I knew him in a minute. A great many carriages were on the street trimmed in flags and flowers. Little flags were fastened to the horses'

harness. Jock had one on each side of his head, which made him look very pretty. Children were running about carrying wreaths. On a corner of the street where a band was playing some men were holding banners. I heard some one say it was Decoration Day, and that everybody strewed flowers on the graves in the big cemetery that day. I thought it was a very beautiful custom. Through all the buzz and confusion I kept an eye on Johnny. He didn't seem to be riding anywhere in particular, but was just looking around for the fun of the thing. Presently he drew up to the sidewalk where a little ragged boy was leaning up against a tree. He had a wistful look, as if he would like to be taking part.

"'Hello!' said Johnny, as he reined Jock in. 'Aren't you going to help to decorate?'

"'Naw—ain't got any posies, I tell you.' The boy said this in a sullen tone.

"'Here, take these. I brought you a big bunch so you could divide 'em with some of your friends. There's enough for

all of you boys to have a few flowers to take to the cemetery.' Johnny extended the roses with a smile as he spoke.

"The boy grabbed them eagerly. 'My! You're a jolly one, I'll say that for you,' he said heartily by way of thanks, then he ran off with a whoop.

"I saw from this action that Johnny was the same generous, kind-hearted boy he used to be, and I felt proud to have had the honor of his acquaintance."

CHAPTER VII

A WINTER IN THE SOUTH

I was wrong about the Phœbe bird ;
Two songs it has, and both of them I've heard ;
I did not know those strains of joy and sorrow
Came from one throat.

AS the season advanced our May songs became less melodious until finally our music was merely a metallic but pleasant, "chink, chink," and we knew we would soon be putting on our new fall attire, as toward the close of the summer our family exchange their pretty black-and-white suits, so much admired, for a becoming yellowish-brown

one. The different flocks were also now arranging for their regular winter trip to the sunny Southland, where their winters were spent.

I was very glad to know that we bobolinks were to travel only in the daytime, as that would afford us younger ones a better opportunity to see the country. The return trip to the North is always made by night. A great many people have wondered why we do this, and those who are interested in our habits have tried to find out; but it is a secret the birds have never yet divulged, and probably never will.

The blue jays were going to remain behind, for the winters which we dreaded so much had no terrors for them. Sometimes when we were preening our feathers under the radiant skies near the Southern gulf, I thought of our old neighbors the jays, and fancied them in their bleak Northern home flitting about in the tops of the leafless trees, swayed by the icy winds from the upper lakes, and with perhaps but little to eat. I would not have exchanged places with them for the world. But my older

comrades assured me the jays were not in need of my sympathy or pity. They liked the invigorating cold and chattered merrily in the desolate boughs and enjoyed many a nice meal from under the melting snow. The crimson dogwood berries, standing out like rosettes of coral, at which they liked to peck, also furnished them an æsthetic and sumptuous feast. Much more to be dreaded than the winter's cold was the cruel sportsman, said my comrades.

The day of our departure came. The concourse of birds setting out on their annual journeys was immense, and oh, what joy it was to soar aloft on buoyant pinion high up in the blue sky, over housetops and tops of trees, skimming along above rushing waters or tranquil streams in quiet meadows. Mere existence was a keen delight. The sense of freedom, of lightness, of airiness, was gloriously exhilarating, a delicious sensation known only to the feathered tribes of all God's creation.

Our trip took us across some densely wooded mountains, where we rested for a time. A thick undergrowth of young sap-

lings prevented any roads, and only occasional narrow footpaths showed that people sometimes passed that way.

The mountain was grand in its loneliness; but doubtless was a desolate spot to the settlers, whose cabins were scattered at long distances from each other in the depths of the wood. I could imagine how cut off from the whole world the women and children in these cabins would feel, for it is natural for human beings to love society. The perpetual stillness must have been hard to bear when months sometimes passed away, especially in the winter season, without their getting a glimpse of other human faces.

The mountains were full of wildcats too, which made their situation worse, as these fierce animals were frequently known to attack men as savagely as wolves do. One day while we were there two travelers camped under the tree where our family was roosting. They had evidently had a hard time making their way through the tangled undergrowth, for as one of the men flung himself down on the ground and

stretched himself out at full length, he exclaimed peevishly:

"Well, I don't want any more such experiences. I'm dead tired; my face is all scratched with the thorns and bushes; and I haven't seen a newspaper for a week. If the railroad company needs any more work of this kind done, they must get somebody else."

"Fiddle-dee-dee! You mustn't be so easily discouraged," answered the other young man, who had already set to work scraping up dry chips and pieces of bark to make a fire. "Think of these poor mountaineers who stay here all their lives. Your little tramp of a few days is nothing to what they do all the time and never think of complaining. The half of them are too poor to own a mule. They eat hog and hominy the year around, and are thankful to get it. Their clothes are fearfully and wonderfully made, but for all that they don't give up and think life isn't worth living."

As the two young fellows talked on in this strain I named them Growler and

Cheery, because the one was so determined to look on the dark side, while the other took a cheerful view of everything. Growler continued to lounge on the ground, looking with careless interest at Cheery, who was preparing dinner.

The dinner was in a small tin box which he took from his coat pocket. Opening it he disclosed some eatables very compactly put in. He took out several articles and set them on the ground in front of him. In the box was a bottle stoutly corked containing a dark liquid, some of which he poured into a flat tin cup which formed a part of the lid of the box. This he set over the fire, which by this time was snapping cheerily.

"Come," he said. "Here's a lunch fit for a king. Get up and have your share. Maybe when your stomach is warmed up with a few ham and mustard sandwiches, some cheese and coffee, you'll be in better spirits. These crackers are good eating too."

"Fit for a king, eh? Mighty poor kind of a king, I should say," growled Growler

sarcastically; but he rose and flicked the leaves and twigs from his clothing before he helped himself to the coffee which was now hot.

"One cup for two people is just one too few," laughed Cheery when it came his turn to take some. "My! but it tastes good. There's nothing like the open air to give one an appetite."

"I don't like coffee without cream," objected Growler, chewing moodily at his cracker.

"Well, we'll get to Girard by to-night, and then possibly we will get a good supper."

While they were lunching I had observed another traveler slowly approaching through the underbrush. Over one shoulder was slung a leather strap in which were a few books. He carried a rifle, and from his coat pocket bulged a small package. As he drew nearer the sound of his footsteps startled Growler who nervously upset his coffee over his shirt front.

"What d'ye suppose he is?" he asked of Cheery as the stranger approached.

"I judge he's a parson, from the cut of his clothes," observed Cheery. Then as the new-comer advanced he called: "Hello, friend! Who'd 'a thought of meeting company this far back in these mountains?"

"This is only about eight miles from the town where I live," answered the gentleman, who now seated himself near them with his back against a tree. "I know the paths through here fairly well, for I come this way several times through the summer. But this will be my last trip for the season, and I'm giving a little more time to it on that account. I've taken it somewhat leisurely to-day."

He was a delicate-looking, middle-aged man, with a mild voice and a kind face.

"You're a drummer for a publishing house, I take it?" said Growler, nodding toward the books in the strap. "I've just been wondering where you'd find any buyers in these infernal woods."

The gentleman laughed. "No," said he, "this is my regular route; but I'm not a commercial traveler in any sense. I'm a pastor at a town near here, and I go

out to these mountain families to hold services every few weeks."

"You don't mean you foot it through these bushes and among these wildcats to preach to the mountaineers!" exclaimed Growler in astonishment.

"Certainly I do. These poor people would never hear the sound of the gospel if some one did not take it to them. They have souls to be saved, my friend. I feel it is my duty to carry the word to them. As for the wildcats," he continued, smiling, "I have my rifle. Besides the government offers a small bounty for every wildcat."

"Oh, yes, I see. You combine business with pleasure and have your wildcat bounty to pay expenses as you go along—or else keep it for pin-money," and Growler laughed good-humoredly at his own fun.

"You're the parson from St. Thomas, I judge," said Cheery.

The gentleman bowed, and said he was the pastor of that little church.

"I've heard of your mission work, and I understand you've done a great deal of good among the mountain whites."

"How many churches have you in these mountains?" interrupted Growler.

"I have but the one church organization, for outside through the mountains there are no churches—no buildings, no organizations. People ten and fifteen miles apart can't very well have churches. I visit the families. I have three on this mountain side. I am well repaid for all the sacrifice of comfort I make, in knowing how glad they are to have me come. To many of them I am the connecting link with the rest of mankind. Ah! the world knows nothing of the privations and sorrows and ignorance of many of these poor creatures! Through the winter I am obliged to stop my visitations, but I generally leave a few books and papers for those who can read, and pictures for the children."

"Well, parson, I didn't know there was enough goodness in any man in the United States to make him willing to tramp right into the wildest part of the Allegheny Mountains to preach the gospel to half a dozen poor people!" exclaimed Growler, still more astonished.

"My friend," responded the gentleman earnestly, "the world is full of Christian men and women who are trying to help others."

Just then my mother said to me, "When I hear the beautiful words that minister speaks and see what he is doing, then indeed do I believe that human beings have hearts."

As we resumed our journey I wondered if Growler would profit by the sunshiny example of Cheery and the devotion of the parson of St. Thomas.

Later in our travels we came upon some old acquaintances. Our stopping-place was near an ancient house on a mountain side. The outlook was the grandest I had ever seen, and though I have traveled much since then I have never found anything to exceed it in beauty. A glistening river wound its way in a big loop at the foot of the mountain, and beyond it lay stretched out a busy city.

A good many years before a battle had been fought on these heights, which people still remembered and talked about. I heard

them speak of it as the "Battle above the clouds." There was still a part of a cannon wagon in the yard which visitors came to see and examined with much interest. They also often requested the landlady to let them look at the walls of an old stone dairy adjoining the house, because the soldiers had carved their names there.

To me it seemed strange that the guests would sit for hours on the long gallery of this hotel, and go over and over the incidents of the battle, telling where this regiment stood, or where that officer fell, as if war and the taking of life were the most pleasant rather than the most distressful subjects in the world. In the distance was a mammoth field of graves, miles of graves, beautifully kept mounds under which lay the dead heroes of that sad time.

The days up here were beautiful, but it was at night that this was a scene of surpassing loveliness. Far below the lights of the city glowed like spangles in the darkness. Above us was the star-encrusted sky. It was like being suspended between a floor and a ceiling of glittering jewels.

On this plateau grew the biggest cherry trees I ever saw, and they bore the biggest and sweetest cherries, though I could not taste any at that time, as the season was past. I heard the landlady complaining one day to some of her guests that the rascally birds had hardly left her a cherry to put up.

"The saucy little thieves! they must have eaten bushels of the finest fruit," she said.

"And didn't you get any?" inquired a childish voice. There was something familiar in the voice and I flew to the porch railing to see who it was. And who should it be but dear little Marion. And there too was her aunty, Miss Dorothy, and the professor, and in the parlor I caught a glimpse of Miss Katie and the colonel. They were having a pleasant vacation together.

Marion looked inquiringly into the landlady's face. No doubt she was thinking the mountain birds were very greedy to eat up all the cherries and not leave one for the poor woman to can.

"Our birds always eat some of our

cherries too," she said, "but they always leave us plenty."

"There were bushels left on our trees," observed the landlady's daughter. "We had all we wanted, mother. We couldn't possibly have used the rest if the birds had not eaten them. We had a cellar full of canned cherries left over from the year before, you remember, and that is the way it is nearly every year."

"Yes, yes, I know," answered her mother impatiently; "but for all that I don't believe in letting the birds have everything."

"I never begrudge a bird what it eats," commented the professor. "Of course you can discourage the birds, drive them off, break up their nests, starve them out, and have a crop of caterpillars instead of cherries. But, beg pardon, madam, maybe you don't object to caterpillars," and he bowed low to the landlady.

The laugh was against her and I was glad of it, for I didn't consider it either kind or polite to call us "saucy little thieves."

We were amused one morning when, flying over a piece of pretty country, we saw a lady moving rapidly along on the red sandy path below. She seemed to be neither exactly riding nor walking, as she was not on foot nor had she a horse. On closer inspection it was seen that she was propelling a strange-looking vehicle. Two of her carriage wheels were gone, and between the remaining two the lady was perched. At sight of it I was immediately reminded of the queer thing that Johnny Morris rode which the admiral had described to us and called a "wheel." I felt sure that this was the same kind of a machine. The lady looked neither to the right nor to the left, but her glance was fixed intently on the road before her.

Farther along another lady leaned against the fence awaiting her approach. As she bowled along the friend asked enthusiastically: "Is it not splendid?"

The rider called back to her: "It is grand! It is almost as if I were flying. I know now how a bird feels."

Think of comparing the sensation pro-

duced by moving that heavy iron machine, with the rider but three feet from the ground, to the exhilaration felt by a bird spurning the earth and soaring on delicate wing through the fields of heaven! It was truly laughable!

Our amusement was cut short, however, when we noticed that the lady's hat was decorated with a dead dove.

"Can we never get away from this millinery exhibition of death?" I exclaimed in horror.

"No," said my mother sorrowfully. "The god, Fashion, I told you of has his slaves all over the land. We will find them wherever we go, north, south, east, and west. No town is too small, no neighborhood too remote, but there will be found women ready to carry out his cruel laws."

Had we not been haunted by this vision of death which we were constantly meeting wherever women were congregated, we might have been happy in the fair land of rose blossoms and magnolias where we now sojourned. The air was soft and balmy, and the atmosphere filled us with a serene,

restful languor quite new to those who had been accustomed to the brisker habits of a colder clime. Besides the birds there were many human visitors from the North spending the winter months here. Some sought this warmer climate for their health, others for pleasure, and these also soon fell into the easy-going, happy-go-lucky ways induced by the sluggish climate.

Among the birds the waxwings most readily acquired this delightful Southern habit of taking life easy. In fact the waxwings are inclined to be lazy, except when they are nesting; they are the most deliberate creatures one can find, but very foppish and neat in their dress. Never will you find a particle of dust on their silky plumage, and the pretty red dots on their wings and tails look always as bright as if kept in a bandbox. They have, indeed, just reason to be proud of themselves, for they are very beautiful.

Hunters by scores were after them with bag and gun mercilessly killing them for the New York millinery houses. The slaughter was terrible, and made more

easy for the hunters by reason of the poor birds flocking together so closely in such large numbers when they alighted in circles as is their habit. As they came down in dense droves to get their food, the red dots on their wing tips almost overlapping those of their fellows, dozens were slain by a single shot. They were very fond of the berries of the cedar trees, and after the other foods were gone they hovered there in great numbers. Here too, the hunters followed them and made awful havoc in their ranks. One man made the cruel boast that the winter previous he had killed one thousand cedar-birds for hat trimmings.

Many of our family had located for a time near the coast, but here too, on these sunny plains, the death messengers followed us and slew us by the thousands.

We learned that one bird man handled thirty thousand bird skins that season. Another firm shipped seventy thousand to the city, and still the market called for more and yet more. The appetite of the god could not be appeased.

I am sure this account of the loss of bird life must have seemed appalling to my mother, for I heard her moan sadly when it was talked about.

It was during my stay in the Southern islands that I first saw the white egret, whose beautiful sweeping plumes, like the silken train of a court lady, have so long been the spoils of woman, that the bird is almost extinct. As these magnificent feathers appear upon the bird only through the mating and nesting season, the cruelty of the act is still more dastardly. The attachment of the parent birds for their young is very beautiful to witness, yet this devotion, which should be their safeguard, is seized upon for their destruction, for so great is the instinct of protecting love they refuse to leave their young when danger is near, and are absolutely indifferent to their own safety.

Never shall I forget one sad incident which occurred while I was there. Overhanging the water was an ancestral nest belonging to a family of egrets which had occupied it for some seasons. Unlike the

American human species, in whom local attachment is not largely developed, and who take a new house every moving day, the egret repairs and fixes over the old house year after year, putting in a new brace there, adding another stick here, to make it firm enough to bear the weight of the mother and the three young birds which always comprise the brood.

The three pale-blue eggs in this nest had been duly hatched, and the fond mother was now brooding over her darlings with every demonstration of maternal affection. She was a beautiful creature with her graceful movement, her train of plumes, and her long neck gracefully curved.

The quick sharp boom, boom of the guns had been echoing through the swamp for some time, and the men were now coming nearer. The efforts of the poor mother to shield her babies were piteous, but the hunters did not want them. Their scant plumage is worthless for millinery purposes. Possibly the mother might have escaped had she been willing to leave her

dear ones; but she would not desert them, and was shot in the breast as the reward of her devotion. The nestlings were left to starve.

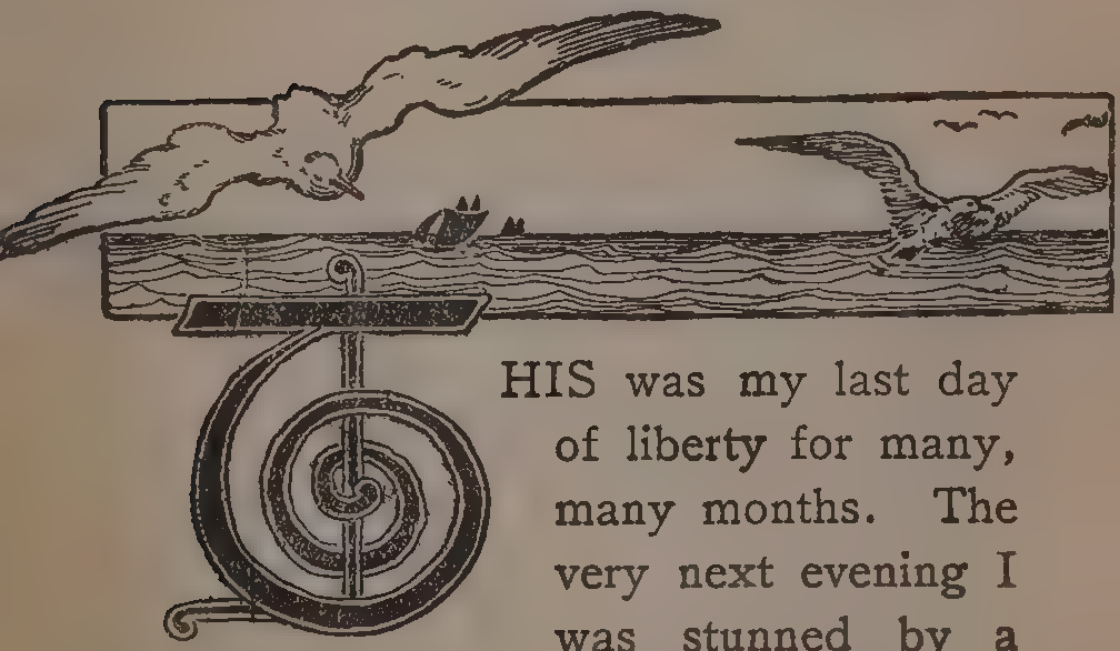
Would you think the woman who wore that bunch of feathers on her bonnet could take much pleasure in it?

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRISON

Like a long-caged bird
Thou beat'st thy bars with broken wing
And flutterest, feebly echoing
The far-off music thou hast heard.

—Arthur Eaton.



HIS was my last day of liberty for many, many months. The very next evening I was stunned by a stone thrown by a small boy who accompanied a hunter. Picking me up he ran toward his father, who was coming back from the neighboring swamp with his loaded gamebag.

"This bird isn't dead," said the boy, holding me up to view, "and I'm going to put it in a cage and train it to talk."

"Crows are the kind that talk. That's no crow nor no starling neither," answered the man. "Better give it to me to kill. I'll pay you a penny for it."

"Naw, you don't," and the boy drew back, at the same time closing his hand over me so tightly that I feared I would be crushed. "I'm going to keep him, I tell ye. He's mine to do what I please with, and I ain't agoing to sell him for a penny, neither."

So saying he ran along in front of his father till we reached the mule cart. Into this clumsy vehicle they climbed and soon we were jogging over the sandy road to their home. As we drove along the man computed, partly to himself, partly aloud, how much money the contents of his game-bag would bring him. The result must have been satisfactory, for presently he observed:

"Purty fair day's wages, but I believe I could make more killing terns and gulls

than these birds. Bill Jones and the hunters up on Cobb's Island last year got ten cents apiece for all the gulls they killed. Forty thousand were killed right there. Oh, it's bound to be a mighty good business for us fellows as long as the wimmen are in the notion, that is, if the birds ain't all killed off."

"Air they getting scarce?" questioned the boy. The man ejected a mouthful of dark, offensive juice from between his grizzled whiskers before replying.

"Yes, purty tol'ble scarce. So much demand for 'em is bound to clean the birds out. There used to be heaps of orioles an' robins an' larks an' blackbirds an' waxwings through the country, but they're getting played out too, since the wimmen tuk to wearin' 'em on their bunnets."

"Well, no woman sha'n't have my bird for her bunnet," and the boy gave me another friendly pinch that nearly broke my bones. "I'm a going to put it in that old cage that's out in the shed and give it to Betty, if she wants it."

"Humph! she won't keer for it. You'd

better kill it. Betty won't be bothered with it."

"She may give it away, or let it loose, or do what she pleases with it, then," was the boy's reply.

I learned from their further conversation that the hunter sold his game to another man who cured the skins for shipment to the city. To this dealer the bag which held my dead companions was taken and I saw them no more. Arriving at the hunter's home I was put under a bucket that I might not escape, while my captor prepared my prison for me. It was an almost needless precaution for I had been so cramped between his fingers that I feared I could never again use my legs or wings. Just before putting me in my rude prison house he brought a pair of shears and bade Betty clip my wings.

"Oh, I'm afraid it will hurt it!" she exclaimed, pushing away the extended scissors.

"Nonsense, you ninny! What if it does hurt it?" and he roughly knocked my bill with his hand.

"Now that's real mean, Joe. You're a scaring it to pieces. Here, Dickey Downy, I'm going to give you a pretty name if you belong to me; let me hold you. Why, its little heart is a thumping as if 'twould burst through its body."

Joe was reluctant to loosen his grasp, and between being pulled first one way and then the other by the two children, I was badly bruised. Finally I was permitted by my young captor to enter the cage, where I sank, trembling and exhausted, to the floor, and remained there all night, being too sore to ascend the perch.

As may be imagined I was very sorrowful and unhappy. The separation from my mother and my dear companions, coupled with the fear that I might never again wing my blithesome flight through the bright blue sky, but spend the balance of my life in this miserable cell, filled me with despair. Frantic but useless were my efforts to escape. In vain I beat my head against the hard steel bars; in vain I endeavored to crowd my body between them. My prison was too secure.

At length I found that fluttering back and forth buffeting my wings against the sides of my cell only injured me and availed nothing. Then it was I wisely made the resolution to endure my imprisonment as cheerfully as possible. I soon began to regain my strength and spirits and, save that I was deprived of my liberty, I had no special fault to find for some days with my treatment from Betty, who was now regarded as my owner and keeper.

I was always glad when Joe was absent from home, for he was vicious as well as rough. One of his favorite tricks was to dash my cage hard against the wall, laughing boisterously as he did so to see how it frightened me. The concussion was frequently so great that my claws could not hold to the perch, and I would be tossed helplessly from side to side with my feathers ruffled and broken. There was but one thing Joe liked better than this cruel sport, and that was gingerbread; and my tortures were often stopped by Betty's producing a slice of this delicacy which she had saved

from her own luncheon for this particular purpose. When I discovered that Joe could be bought off with gingerbread it can be imagined that I was always glad on the days when the pungent odors of cinnamon, ginger, and molasses issued from the cook-stove. It was a surety of peace, of a cessation of hostilities as long as the cake lasted.

All went fairly well for a little while, but as the novelty of possession gradually wore off, my little jailer grew negligent and left me much of the time without water or food. Frequently my throat was so parched from thirst that I could not utter a protesting chirp. I knew no other way to attract attention to my wants than to flutter to the bars and thrust out my head; unfortunately this action was attributed to wildness and a desire to escape, and I was allowed to suffer on.

"That bird is the most annoying, restless thing I ever saw," complained Betty's mother one evening when I was thus trying to tell them my cup was empty. "It spends all its time poking its head through

the wires or thrashing around in the cage, instead of getting up on its perch and behaving itself quietly as a decent bird should."

"Do you reckon it's sick?" suggested Betty, and she came to my cage and looked at me attentively.

"Reckon it's hungry, you mean," growled her father, who was in one corner of the kitchen cleaning his gun.

"She never feeds it any more," commented the mother. "What's the use of keeping it? I'd wring its neck and be done with it. Betty don't keer a straw for it."

"Yes, I do," cried the little girl. "I'll get it something to eat this very minute."

These spasms of attention only lasted a day or two, however, when my young keeper would lapse into carelessness, and again I would be allowed to go with an empty crop and a dry throat. My beautiful plumage grew rusty from this irregularity and continual neglect, and although I am not a vain bird, my dingy appearance was a source of daily grief and mortifica-

tion to me. When Betty was not too busy playing she sometimes hung my cage outside the door of the cottage, but often for days together through the pleasant summer I was left hanging in the kitchen, sometimes half-choked with smoke or dampened with steam. No wonder I drooped and ceased my cheerful song.

The days when I was put out of doors were indeed gala days to me. Many families of young chickens lived in the back yard, and the pipings of the little ones and the scoldings of the mothers when their children ran too far away from them, were always amusing to listen to and gave me something to think about which kept my mind off my own troubles.

I liked to watch the hens with their fuzzy broods tumbling about them, or with the older chicks when they scratched the ground and ceaselessly clucked for them to come to get their share of what was turned up in the soil; meanwhile they kept a sharp lookout with their bright eyes to see that no outsider shared in the feast. And how angrily did they drive it away

should a chick from another brood heedlessly rush in among them to get a taste.

One old hen in particular interested me very much. I noticed her first because of her pretty bluish color and the dark markings around her neck, but I soon came to pity her, for she made herself quite unhappy and seemed to take no comfort in anything. She was usually tied to a tree by the leg, and although her string was long it seemed always just a little too short to reach the thing she wanted. To make matters worse she had a bad fashion of rushing wildly around the tree and getting her string wound up shorter and shorter until at last she could not stir a step, but would hang by one foot foolishly pulling as hard as she could. It always seemed to me that her chickens were more disobedient than the rest, because they knew she could not get to them nor follow them.

Joe sometimes slyly threw pebbles at this blue hen to scare her and make her jump and pull at the string, when he thought his mother was not looking. As pay for his sport he often got his ears

cuffed, for though his mother did not seem to notice how cruelly he teased me, she would not allow him to frighten her fowls.

"Don't you know that a hen that's all the time skeered won't lay?" was the lesson she tried to impress on him as she punished him.

But the thing I liked best of all was to see Betty's seven white ducks crowd up to the kitchen door every time any one appeared with a pan of scraps. Such gabbling and quacking, such pushing and such stepping on each other and on the chickens, in their eagerness to get there first, was almost laughable. In fact, the pink-toed pigeons that walked up and down the ridge of the barn roof, did make fun of them openly. Had I not known the ducks were well fed and so fat they could scarcely waddle, I might have thought they were really hungry, but I soon discovered that they were simply greedy.

Standing on tiptoe and stretching up their long necks they often seized the food before it had a chance to fall to the ground.

By this good management they usually got more than the chickens. Joe accused Betty of being partial to the ducks.

"You allus give 'em the best of everything, and twice as much as you do the chickens," he complained.

"They get the most because they've got the most confidence in me," said Betty, putting on a very wise look. "They come close up to me, while a chicken shies off and misses the goodies coz she's silly enough to be afraid. Besides, the ducks are mine. I raised 'em. I paid twenty cents a setting for the eggs out of my own money, and when you raise a thing you generally like it the best. Ducks are a heap smarter'n chickens, anyway," she asserted. "I never can get one of the chickens to feed out of a spoon, and the ducks like it the best kind." To convince him she held toward them a large baking spoon of soured milk. This milk was thickened into a paste or ball by being put on the stove and separated from the whey, or watery part, by the action of the heat. It was a favorite dish with the fowls, and

they all smacked their lips when they saw it coming.

As fast as Betty could fill the spoon it was emptied by the ducks, who stuck their big yellow bills into it and devoured the contents, letting the chickens below scramble and push and pick each other for any stray bits that fell to the ground.

"Didn't I tell you?" said Betty triumphantly. "Them chickens had just as good a chance as the ducks, but they wouldn't take it."

"Huh!" answered Joe. "Their necks ain't long enough, is what's the matter."

There were several trees in the yard, and often when the fowls were fed, birds flew down from their leafy recesses to pick up the crumbs left lying about. How I used to wish they would come near enough to my cage that I might converse with them, but it always happened that just at the time when one of them would settle close to the house, either Joe's little dog, Colly, would run across the yard, or Betty or her mother would appear at the door and frighten my feathered friend

away. Only once did I exchange a word with any of these birds, and that for but a few short minutes.

The bird did not belong to our family, nor had I ever met any of his relatives before, but that made but little difference. He was a bird, and that was enough. We did not wait for any formal introduction; but as he balanced himself on the edge of my cage he hurriedly told me news of the woods, and how he wished I might get free and come to live there. He told of the lovely dragon flies, with purple, burnished wings that floated in the forest, mingling their drowsy hum with the chirping of the birds. He told of the great mossy carpet spread under the trees; how at set of day the owls came out, and the moles rustled in the fallen leaves, and the frogs raised their evening hymn to the sinking sun.

I could have listened for hours to the sweet familiar tale my feathered brother told of life in the happy woodland, but Betty's mother suddenly hurrying out to the pump to fill her bucket, cut short the story,

and away my bird friend skimmed out of sight without so much as saying "good-bye." Though I saw him several times after that, he never came so close again.

"Oh, what heaps and heaps of fire-flies!" exclaimed Betty, as she unhooked my cage to move me into the house that evening. "It looks as if our door-yard was full of moving lanterns."

"Nothin' but lightnen bugs!" said Joe contemptuously. "Here, see me catch 'em," and in a few minutes he showed her a handful which he had killed by crushing between his hands.

"Hold on, I want to catch some too!" and hustling me into the kitchen, Betty ran along with him and was soon engaged in catching and killing the beautiful fireflies.

CHAPTER IX

THE HUNTERS

Song birds, plumage birds, water fowl, and many innocent birds of prey, are hunted from the everglades to the Arctic Circles for the barbaric purpose of decorating women's hats. The extent of this traffic is simply appalling.

—*G. O. Shields.*

WHEN Joe and his father came back from their gunning expeditions, the accounts they gave of the day's slaughter made me very homesick and miserable, and wore sadly on my spirits in my captivity.

The heartless indif-

ference with which the woman would ask her husband if it had been "a good day for killings," almost made me wail aloud.

"Best kind of luck; I bagged nearly a hundred this trip," he replied exultingly, one night when she put the usual question. "The birds were as thick as blackberries in the high weeds along the creek, and were havin' a mighty good time stuffing themselves with seeds. Joe fired the old gun to start 'em and, great Jerushy! in a minute the sky was dark with 'em; I just blazed away and they dropped thick all around us, and it kept us tol'ble busy for a while a pickin' 'em up."

"Pop, tell 'em about the old water bird down in the swamp," said Joe with a wicked laugh.

"Yes, tell us; what was it, pop?" urged Betty.

"Oh, nothin' partickler, I reckon; just an old bird that hadn't the grit to get away from me," and the man gave a low chuckle at the remembrance.

"My, oh! the way them old birds hung around and wouldn't scare worth a cent

when we was right up close to 'em was funny, I tell ye,'' and Joe leaned back in his chair and slapped his knees in a fresh burst of merriment.

''There was eggs in the nest was the cause,'' said the man; ''them birds are always as tame as kittens then. You can go right up to 'em and they won't leave the nest. Them birds has two broods in a season, and then's the chance to get a good whack at 'em.''

Joe rubbed his hands together in delight as he turned to his sister, ''You'd ought to have seen 'em, Betty. There was pop in his rubber boots a creepin' along—a c-r-e-e-p-i-n' along as sly as a mouse toward 'em, and there they stayed. The male bird he fluttered and squawked, and the female she stuck to the nest till pop he got right up and he didn't even have to shoot her. He just clubbed her over the back and down she went ker-splash as dead as you please. Them there eggs won't hardly hatch out this year, I don't reckon,'' and at the prospect Joe broke into a malicious guffaw.

"I think to club it was meaner'n to shoot the poor thing," said Betty indignantly. "And, anyway, I wouldn't a-killed it on the nest. It's mean to treat an 'fectionate bird so."

"Pshaw, you'd do big things!" was Joe's scornful reply.

"Well, I wouldn't be so tremenjus cruel," persisted Betty; "I don't believe in killing a pretty bird."

"But what would the wimmen do without bunnet trimmen' if we didn't kill 'em, hey?" and Joe finished his question with a taunting whistle.

As the shadows of each evening gathered around the cottage, the shadow over my life seemed to deepen and grow more gloomy. Outside the door I could hear the hum of the bees as they flew homeward, the wind-harp played in the yellow pines its softest, sweetest music, and I scented the odor of honeysuckles and roses far away. The rushing of the waters over the stones in the creek tinkled dreamily, but in the midst of all earth's loveliness I was desolate, because I was not free.

And thus the summer days dragged wearily along, and the autumn came. It is not surprising then that I was overjoyed when later on I learned that I was to be given as a present to a young relative of Betty's, who lived to the northward in a distant State. My present existence had grown almost intolerable, and I felt that any change could scarcely make my condition worse, and there was a chance of its being better. The prospect put new life into me.

Preening my feathers became a pleasant task once more. I whetted my bill till it glistened, and my long-neglected toilet again became my daily care.

"I shall be mighty glad to get rid of the mopy creature," Betty's mother had said when they talked of my departure. "I wouldn't give the thing house-room for my part."

"Cousin Polly will like it, though," Betty answered her mother. "Polly was always fond of pets, and she'll be powerful pleased to get it as a present from her Southern kinfolks."

"We'll have to go to the cost of a new cage, I reckon, and I don't feel like spending the money, neither," mused the mother. "Polly might like a bresspin better. I don't know as it will pay to send her the bird after all."

How my heart sank at this announcement! so fearful was I that I might have to remain at the cottage; but Betty's answer gave me new hope.

"Oh, certain it will pay!" she exclaimed eagerly. "You know how many nice things Cousin Dunbar's sent us off-and-on, and only last Christmas Polly sent me my string of beads. As for giving her a bresspin for a keepsake, she can get a heap nicer one out of their own store than any we could send her, and I'm certain she'd like the bird best of all; it's such a good chance to send it by Uncle Dan when he is going to their town and can hand it right over to Polly."

"I reckon you're right. Well, it will be only the cost of the cage," said her mother, and so the matter was settled, much to my satisfaction.

My new cage was very pretty, if anything can be said in praise of a prison, and was much lighter and pleasanter than the old, heavy, home-made structure in which I had been shut up so long. Its rim was painted a cheerful green, and the wires were burnished like gold. Ornamental sconces held the glass cups for my food and there were decorated hoops to swing in. Altogether it was a very handsome house, yet I could not forget it was a prison house.

Betty busied herself in fixing it comfortably for me, and was full of kind attentions. She begged me many times not to get frightened when the cover would be put on my cage. The hood was necessary when I was traveling, but Uncle Dan would be sitting right near me all the time and would be very good to me. She further assured me that I would find the motion of the cars delightful, and that all I would have to do was to sit on my perch and munch my seed and have a good time. How jolly it would be to go whizzing past fences and over bridges and through tun-

nels and towns and never know it, she said. She also charged me particularly not to be scared when I would hear an occasional horrible shriek and a rumbling like thunder, as if the day of judgment was at hand. I must remember it was only the locomotive, and it was obliged to do those disagreeable things to make the cars go faster'n, faster'n, faster'n——

How much faster I did not have time to find out, for Uncle Dan just then called to get me. A light cover with a hole in the top was slipped over my cage, and I started on my journey. Of my trip, of course, I knew nothing. Part of the way we rode in a wagon through the country to the station where we took the train, but as Uncle Dan did not remove my cover in the railway car the time spent on the journey was almost a blank to me.

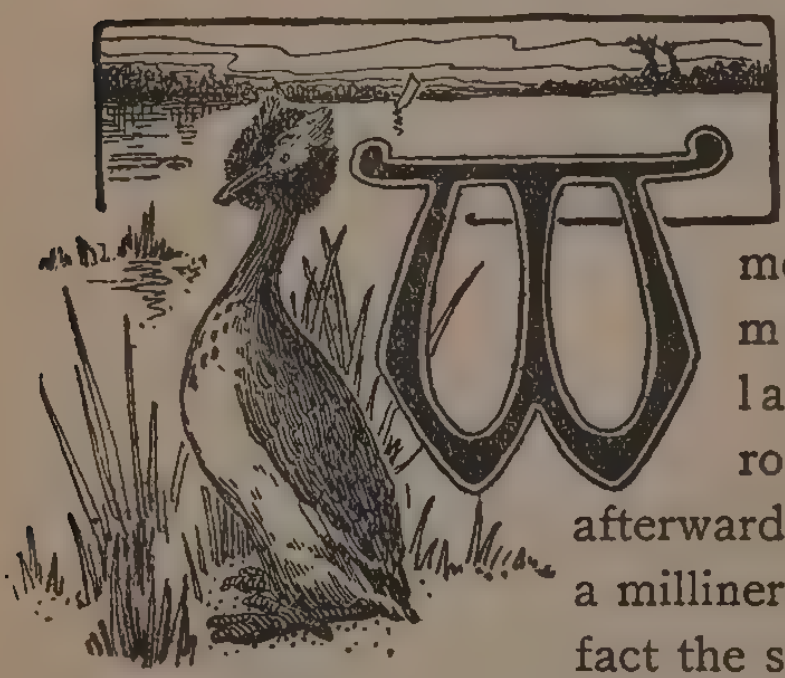
Right glad was I, after what seemed a long, long time of jarring and jolting, to find the cage once more swinging from his hand and to hear the click of his boot heels on the pavements as we went through the streets of the town where Polly lived.

CHAPTER X

A NEW HOME

Should it happen that the last egret is shot and the last bird of paradise is snared to adorn a lady's dress, then—then I would not like to be a woman for all that earth could hold.

—Herbert D. Ward.



WHEN at last my covering was removed I found myself in a large, long room, which I afterward learned was a millinery store. In fact the store was the front part of the family residence, the living rooms being behind and upstairs over it. My cage was hung near the wide doorway at the end of the apartment and my new mistress at once ran to fill my cup

with fresh water and bring me a supply of clean millet. After I had refreshed myself I began to look about me and study my strange surroundings.

My new home was so unlike the little log house in the South from which I had come that it was many days before I could accustom myself to the clatter of voices which buzzed monotonously all day through the store. From ten o'clock in the morning, if the day were fine, till three in the afternoon, the din at times was almost deafening; for it was the busy season and customers were constantly coming and going, not all of them to buy, merely to look over the ribbons and tumble up the goods, as I heard the tired clerks say complainingly more than once.

Numerous glass cases were placed near the walls, and running cross-wise were a counter and shelves much frequented by ladies who stood eagerly examining the array of bright gauzes, the glittering buckles, the flowers and plumes displayed there. And what a chattering they kept up! What a stir and a hubbub they

made! So many "Oh-h's" and "Ah-h's," so many "How lovely's," and other ecstatic exclamations, were mingled with their conversation as was quite bewildering. In time, however, I became accustomed to this and discovered it was simply a way ladies have of expressing their approval of things in general. Around the glass cases which held the trimmed hats the women buzzed like a swarm of flies, their volubility assuming a more emphatic character as they gazed within at the fashionable headgear placed on long steel wires. Almost every hat held one, or a part of one, of my slaughtered race. Frequently there were parts of two or three varieties on one hat—a tail of one kind, a wing of another, or a head of a different species. The ends of the world had been searched to make this patchwork of blood. The women raved over the cruel display; they gloated over our beauty; but they cared nothing for the pathetic story the hats told of rifled nests and motherless young.

My new owner was a soft-voiced, gentle

child, from whom I soon found I had nothing to fear. She was most careful to keep my cage in order and never neglected to feed me. Unlike her little friend Betty, she never allowed her sports or pleasures to interfere with this duty. Often her playmates came for a romp in the garden behind the store, but she did not join them till she had first attended to my wants. I was fond of having her talk to me, for her voice was sweet and kind, and the little terms of endearment she often used were very pleasing and made me feel she was my true friend. She once tried to pet me by stroking my feathers, but I did not like it. Although I knew she did not mean to hurt me, the motion of her hand made me nervous. Instead of persisting, she only said reproachfully, as she put me back on my perch:

"Dear Dickey Downy, why are you afraid of me? Your own little Polly wouldn't hurt you for the world. I wanted to softly stroke your pretty plumage just out of pure love and, you dear little coward, you won't let me."

In her affection for me, Polly did not forget the wild birds outside, which flew about in the big evergreen trees near the garden gate. She showed her thoughtfulness for the little creatures by strewing bread crumbs for them on the window sills on snowy days. She often gathered up the tablecloth after the housemaid had removed the breakfast dishes and, running out under the trees, would shake it vigorously that her wild pets might get all the little pieces of food that fell. Not a bird came down as long as she remained in the yard, but as soon as she had tripped back to the house and the door closed upon her brown curls, I could see a drove of hungry snowbirds swoop from the trees, and in a minute every crumb would be picked up. I am sure they must have loved dear little Polly, for many a choice bit did they get through her kindness.

While the majority of the customers at the store were well-dressed women, there were many who came to buy hats who looked poor and pinched. A few looked slatternly.

A sudden swing of their dress skirts would disclose a badly frayed petticoat or a tattered stocking showing above the shabby shoe. Their gloveless hands were red and cold and coarse, and the milliner told the clerk that she dreaded to have them handle her filmy laces or glistening satins, because their rough fingers stuck to the delicate fabrics and injured them.

These poor women worked hard, early and late. Beyond the barest necessities they had little to spare, and yet not a woman among them would have bought an unfashionable or out-of-date hat could she have had it at one quarter the price. Feathers were fashionable, and feathers she must have. Might not one "as well be out of the world as out of the fashion"?

All this dreadful traffic in my murdered comrades, and their display in the glass cases as well as on the heads of the customers, naturally made me very sad, and I now looked with aversion at every woman who entered the store. But that all were not heartless fiends who were robed in feminine garb I found out another day

when a daintily dressed lady came in to purchase a winter hat. The contents of the glass cases were looked over critically for some time before she selected one which she tried on before the long mirror. The milliner, who deftly adjusted it for her, tipping it first forward a little, then setting it back a trifle, stood off now to view the effect, at the same time assuring her how beautiful it was, and how vastly becoming to her.

"I like this hat very much," said the lady; "or at least I shall like it when the bird is taken off."

"You think the oriole too gay? Orange is quite the vogue," answered the milliner, who seemed reluctant to make any change, and yet was anxious to please her customer. "Perhaps you'd prefer some wings; or stay, here is a sweet little gull that will go all right with the rest of the trimming. We will take off the oriole if you wish."

"Thank you, but I have decided not to wear birds any more," said the customer.

"But the effect would be quite spoiled without a wing, or an aigrette, or some-

thing there," exclaimed the milliner. "You wouldn't like it. I wouldn't think of taking off the bird, if I were you."

"Yes, I shall like it much better with the bird off," returned the lady quietly. "I have sufficient sins to answer for without any longer adding the crime of bird slaughter to the list."

The milliner bestowed on her a pitying smile, but evidently was too politic to get into a discussion of an unpleasant subject. Having given her final order for the hat, the lady crossed over to the other side of the room and shook hands with a friend whom she addressed as Mrs. Brown, who had just come in and was making a purchase at the lace counter.

"I have been putting my new resolution into effect," she remarked after the first greetings; "I have just ordered my new hat, and it is not to have a bird or a wing or a tail on it."

"Oh, I'm glad to hear of one convert to the gospel of mercy," said Mrs. Brown heartily. "The apathy of our women on this subject is heart-sickening.

Men are denouncing us; the newspapers are full of our cruelty; the pulpit makes our heartlessness its theme; and yet we keep on with our barbarous work with an indifference that must make the angels weep."

Her face glowed with righteous indignation. It was easy to see that any cause to which she might commit herself was sure of an ardent and untiring champion.

"But they tell me that chicken feathers and those of other domestic fowls are being largely used now instead of birds," said the other lady.

"Oh, yes; they tell us so because they want to prevent us from getting alarmed, since so much has been said against the destruction of the birds. It is true that chicken feathers always have been used to some extent, the straight quills for instance. I know it is frequently broadly asserted that the most of the birds used are made birds, but the manufactured creatures are poor deceptions; they are mixed with bird feathers, and are sold only to the less fastidious customers. The demand for genuine birds is as great as ever."

"But do you think as many are used now as formerly?" questioned her companion.

"Yes, indeed! Just think of the feather capes and muffs and collarettes made of birds. The market for them is increasing all the time. It takes from eighteen to twenty-five skins for each collar, and I don't know how many for the muffs. Oh, I tell you, women are heaping up judgment on themselves."

The other lady looked grave. "I understand," said she, "that in many places down on the New Jersey coast the boatmen have given up fishing, as they can make so much more money killing terns and gulls for women's use. They earn fifty dollars a week at it, at ten cents apiece for the birds. Isn't that a horrible record for women?"

"I don't doubt they earn that much, and perhaps more," answered Mrs. Brown; "for one season there were thirty thousand terns killed in one locality alone. And at Cape Cod, and up along the shore near where I lived, they are slain by thousands

every season and shipped to New York. Oh, I can't tell you how distressing it used to be to hear the report of the guns day after day and know that every piercing sound was the sign that more innocent lives were being taken. I used to cover up my ears and try not to hear them. It made me shiver to know that those poor gulls were being shot down for nothing. Their only crime consisted in being beautiful."

Both women turned at that moment attracted by the sight of a young lady who was standing on the pavement outside in an animated talk with another girl.

"There's Miss Van Dyke, with her new feather collar on," observed Mrs. Brown, in a low voice.

The young lady in question was a dashing, radiant creature, bright with smiles and a face like a picture. On her shapely shoulders was a magnificent cape, lustrous as satin, of silvery white, into which pale dark lines softly blended at regular intervals. Twenty-two innocent lives had been taken to make that little garment. Twenty-

two beautiful grebes slain that their glossy breasts might lend splendor to a lady's wardrobe.

The two friends looked at Miss Van Dyke in silence for a moment, then sighed as she passed along out of their view.

"When I see such perversion of woman's nature I wonder that the very stones do not cry out against us," exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "And mark my words, the slaughter will go on; the unholy traffic will not long be confined to grebe's breasts for muffs and cape trimmings. Other birds will be used. The gentle creatures are not all put on hats."

"Oh! I must not forget to tell you that the new preacher over at the Second Church has begun a course of lectures on the work of mercy that women might do. He says that as mothers in the homes, and as teachers in the public schools and the Sabbath-schools, we have a grand opportunity."

"So we have; but what avails our opportunity if our eyes are blinded so that we do not see it?" assented Mrs. Brown.

"Last night," resumed the lady, "he spoke particularly of the crime of wearing birds; and he accuses us of being more cruel than men."

"He does?" questioned Mrs. Brown, in great surprise. "Why, we all know that woman's part in this wickedness comes from her desire to look pretty; at least she thinks that wearing birds adds to her beauty. Her wickedness does not come from actual love of butchery. But men and boys have shot innocent creatures since the world began for the mere brutal pleasure of killing something. It seems as though they were born with a blood-thirsty instinct, a wanting to destroy life, to hunt it and shoot it down. They beg to go gunning almost before they are out of dresses and into trousers. Every mother knows there is a savage streak in her boy's nature. No," continued Mrs. Brown, with a decisive nod of her head, "I say let the man who is without sin among them be the first to cast stones now. Perhaps this very preacher spent all his Saturdays robbing birds' nests and clubbing birds

when he was a little boy, and kept it up until he was big enough to kill them with a gun. Of course there are some who do not; not all boys are cruel. But this cruelty does not excuse ours. Man's wickedness does not make us the less guilty. We will be held responsible all the same."

The other woman looked thoughtful. "Well," she said at last, "I haven't quite lost all faith in womanly mercy. Women don't mean to be cruel; the trouble is they don't think."

"Don't think!" echoed Mrs. Brown scornfully. "Don't think! That is an excuse entirely too babyish for women to offer in this age of the world. Do they want to be regarded as irresponsible children forever? Don't you know that childish thoughtlessness on a subject as important as the needless taking of life argues tremendously against us? Here we are at the twentieth century, and with all our boasted advancement we are as cruel and savage as Fiji Islanders. Oh, don't talk to me about women!" and she made an

outward motion of her hand as if pushing away an imaginary drove of them that was coming too near. "I haven't a particle of patience with them. If they're not in the habit of thinking, let them begin it right off. Let them begin it before the birds are all destroyed. If they have the least spark of tenderness left in their hearts——"

The rest of the sentence was lost in the louder tones of a pert little miss, who in company with her mother was rummaging over a box of trimmings on the counter nearest my cage.

CHAPTER XI

THE ILL-MANNERED CHILD

O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as ithers see us.

—*Burns.*

There lived of yore a saintly dame,
Whose wont it was with sweet accord
To do the bidding of her Lord
In quaintly fashioned bonnet
With simplest ribbons on it.

"I WON'T have ribbon loops, I tell you," exclaimed the child. "I want an owl's head and I'm going to have it."

"Why, my dear, the ribbon is ever so much prettier," urged the mother soothingly. "An owl's head is too old a trimming

for your hat, dear. It wouldn't do at all. Here, select some of this nice ribbon."

"Didn't I say I wouldn't have it?" answered "dear" pettishly, as she reached into another box containing an assortment of wings, quails, tails, and parts of various birds jumbled up together. Picking out a pair of blackbird's wings she placed them jauntily against the rim of an untrimmed hat which her mother held.

"There, that looks nice," was her comment. "If I can't have an owl's head I'm going to have these wings."

Her mother mildly assured her that the ribbon was more suitable only to be met with the reply: "You can wear it yourself then, for I sha'n't wear it."

This shocking disrespect caused two old ladies who were pricing hat pins to turn quickly and view the offender.

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated one of them, drawing a deep breath. "If that youngster belonged to me for about twenty minutes, wouldn't I give her something wholesome that she'd remember? I'd take the tantrums out of her in short order."

"She deserves it, sure," said her companion. "But the mother is more to blame than the child for letting it grow up with such abominable manners. I dare say the woman at first thought it was cute and smart in the little thing, and now she can't help herself. La, sakes! just listen to that." She re-adjusted her spectacles and gazed with added interest at the pair in altercation.

With the hat poised on her finger the milliner was bending smilingly toward the little girl who was giving her order in a very peremptory tone.

"I want those wings put on my hat. I won't wear it if you trim it only in ribbon."

The mother seemed a little embarrassed as she told the milliner that she supposed the hat would have to be trimmed in the way Elsie wanted it.

"Humph! I knew the child would get what she wanted," observed the old lady who had first spoken. "I felt all the time that the mother would have to give in. What on earth did she let her take those big black wings for? Two of those little

yellow sugar birds would have been better for a child's hat. The idea of letting a youngster rule you that way! My!" and then she took another deep breath. "She needs a trouncing, if ever a child did," and with that she and her friend resumed their shopping.

The cloud had vanished from Elsie's face, and all was serene again. Her mother seemed somewhat ashamed of her little girl's bad manners, as was shown by her apologetic air when she observed to the trimmer that Elsie was as queer a child as ever lived. When she set her mind on a thing, it was so hard for her to give it up.

They waited for the new hat to be trimmed, and on its completion Elsie seized it and put it on her head, much against her mother's wishes, who preferred not to have it displayed until the next day at Sunday-school; but the insistence of the child was so vehement that again the mother thought it wise to yield, and Elsie tripped off in triumph to the other end of the store with the black wings showing

THE BALTIMORE ORIOLE

out stiffly on each side of her head. The mother remarked, with forced playfulness, as she watched her, "Elsie's a g-r-e-a-t girl, I tell you. You can't fool her."

As the trimmer returned the boxes to the shelves, I overheard her mutter, "Oh, yes, Elsie is a g-r-e-a-t girl, a perfect little jewel, so well-behaved. Her polite manners show her careful home training; quite a reflection on her dear mamma." But from the peculiar laugh she gave I didn't believe she really meant it as praise.

When the nights grew longer and the store was closed for the evening, the milliner and her husband usually spent an hour or two in the back room looking over the newspaper which came every day from the city. The man always turned at once to the wheat reports, and the price of wool, which he read aloud to his wife, though I could see she did not care very much to hear about them; but she hunted first for the fashion notes and the bargains in millinery before she read the other news. One night while thus engaged she suddenly exclaimed:

"Here's something that is bound to hurt trade."

By trade she meant the millinery business.

"What is it?" her husband inquired, looking over the top of the page he held.

"Why, here's a lot of women who have been meeting in a convention in Chicago and getting excited and losing their heads, and passing some ridiculous resolutions."

"What kind of resolutions?" he inquired.

"Oh, they've been denouncing the fashion of wearing birds. They belong to a society called—called—something or other, I forget what. Let me see," and she ran her eye down the column. "Oh, yes, here it is. They are members of the O'Dobbin society, and they got so wrought up on the subject they took the feathers out of their hats right there in the meeting and vowed never to wear bird trimming again. Well, if such outlandish notions spread, you'll soon see how it will injure the millinery trade."

"Pshaw! you needn't worry. The pro-

tests of a handful of fanatical women can't do your business any harm," he answered carelessly, and turned to his paper again.

She shook her head. "I'm not so sure of that. I think there are some women in this very town just cranky enough to endorse such foolishness. There's Mrs. Judge Jenkins for one. I've never yet been able to sell her a real stylish hat. She won't wear birds, because she thinks it's wicked. I hope to goodness she won't consider it her duty to start an O'Dobbin society here."

From the depths of my heart I blessed those kind women who had shown their disapproval of the nefarious traffic in bird life, and had pledged themselves to our protection. True, they were but a handful compared with the millions whom the god Fashion still held in bondage, only a handful who were fighting the good fight; but would not the influence of their noble example and their pledge of mercy be spread abroad till all the women in Christian lands would join in the crusade against the wrong?

In my joy at the thought I chirped so loudly that the lady looked up from her reading. She seemed suddenly to recall a thought as she glanced at my cage, for she said, "I must not forget to ask Katharine if she can take the bird home with her next week and keep it while Polly is gone to the country. I'll be sure to forget to feed it. Anyway, I haven't time to bother with it."

The day before Polly left for the country I heard her inquiring for the "Daily," which I remembered was the name they called the newspaper containing the account of the noble city ladies who had pledged themselves not to wear us any more.

"Tuesday's paper?" her mother asked; she was busy at the time fastening a poor, little, mute swallow on a rich hat. "Perhaps it was thrown behind the counter. Did you want it for any special purpose?"

Polly replied that she wanted to read something in it.

"Well, it is probably torn up by this time," said her mother. "If it isn't on the table in the back room, or on the shelf

by the window, or behind the counter, I'm sure I don't know where it is."

The young clerk who was arranging the goods on the counter had heard Polly's inquiry, and she now asked if it was the newspaper that told about the women who thought it wrong to wear birds. It seemed to me that Polly hesitated a little as she replied that that was the very paper she wanted.

"Goodness, child, is that the piece you want to read?" Her mother's voice sounded rather sharp, as if she were vexed. "I hope that subject hasn't turned your head too," but she said no more, for just then a customer coming in, she laid down her work and went forward to greet her.

Polly looked troubled, but she confided to Miss Katharine that she wanted very much to read the account.

"Fortunately I cut the piece out to give to my sister. I knew she'd be interested in it, but I have always forgotten to give it to her," said the clerk. She seemed to be very much in earnest as she continued, "I do wish something could be done to

save the birds. If women must have feathers, why can't they content themselves with wearing ostrich tips and plumes? There is nothing cruel or wicked in the way they are procured."

She opened the little satchel hanging at her belt, and from it took a folded slip of paper which she handed to Polly, telling her she might have it to read, and when she had finished it to please bring it back to her. Polly thanked her, and ran away to a quiet corner of the back room, where I saw her slowly reading the clipping as she rocked herself in her pretty birch chair. When she had read it through, she sat for some time looking very thoughtful. At last she rose and carried the paper back to Miss Katharine, halting a moment as she passed my cage, to whisper softly:

"Dickey Downy, you dear little fellow, I'm going upstairs right this very minute to take the feathers off my best Sunday hat and I'm never, never going to wear birds any more."

CHAPTER XII

TWO SLAVES OF FASHION

I do not like the fashion of your garments.
—*Shakespeare.*

I'm sure thou hast a cruel nature and a bloody.
—*Shakespeare.*

TWO young ladies, fashionably dressed, met each other that afternoon just in front of our side window, which had been raised to let in the air. From the warmth of their greeting I saw that they were on terms of friendly intimacy.

One of the girls stood a little out of the range of my vision, therefore I could not

hear her voice when she talked, if, indeed, she had a chance to say anything, but the vivacious monologue carried on by her friend was amply sufficient to show the theme which interested them.

How glibly that pretty creature chattered! How fast the words flew! How she arched her eyebrows and shrugged her shoulders and winked her eyes and wrinkled her forehead and pursed her rosy lips and tilted her nose and gesticulated with her slender hand and tapped the pavement with her umbrella point, passing from each phase of expression to the next with a rapidity truly wonderful. Occasionally she went through with these strange grimaces all at once. She was indeed a whirlwind of language, an avalanche of emotion.

Her voice was high pitched and shrill, so that every one on the street must have heard her as she exclaimed:

"Oh, Nell, how perfectly lovely your new hat is! Turn around so that I can see the other side. Oh-h, ah-h, that darling little bird with its glossy plumage

among the velvet is too sweet for anything! If anything it is prettier than Kate Smith's hat with the thrush's head and wings, although I'll admit hers is awfully stylish. You ought to see my new hat. Ah, I tell you it's a beauty; soft crown of silvery stuff, and on one side a tall aigrette and a dear little cedar-bird, and toward the back is the cutest, cunningest humming-bird with its tiny green body and long bill. It looks as if it were ready to fly or to sing. I selected the trimming for sister May's new hat too. It is brown velvet and has an oriole on it; you know they are so showy and bright it makes you almost think you are in the woods. At Madame Oiseau Mort's, where I get my millinery, there was another hat I had a notion to take. It was built up with robins' wings and part of a tern was on it too, I believe—just lovely! but afterward I was glad I didn't buy it, for that decoration is more common. I counted nine hats in church last Sunday trimmed with gulls. Of course they were pretty, for a handsome bird makes any hat pretty.

"By the way, Nell, I must tell you something perfectly ridiculous! Do you know papa pretends it's wicked for women to wear birds on their hats or trim their gowns with feather trimming? Did you ever? I told him we'd be a mighty sorry-looking set going around like a lot of female Dunkards or Salvation Army women, without a bit of style, and he said those women hadn't the sin on their souls of wearing birds that had been killed on purpose to minister to their vanity; that he'd rather be a peaceful-faced Dunkard woman or Salvationist with her plain bonnet and her gentle heart than a gay society butterfly with her empty head loaded down with dead birds.

"Isn't it perfectly horrid for him to talk like that? He is such an old fogy in his ideas he actually makes me tired. Then he went on to say that never again could he believe that women are the tender-hearted creatures they have always been supposed to be, when they show themselves so eager to be decked with the innocent songsters whose lives are sacrificed

by the million on the altar of fashion; the men have always been taught that woman's nature was morally superior to theirs, but we'd have to give up this criminal fad which we have persisted in at such a fearful price of bird life before we could be regarded as other than monstrously cruel and bloody. However, he prophesied that the fashion can't continue much longer anyway, because there soon won't be any birds left, and then, he says, we'll have a world without its sweetest music. It will be hushed by the folly of woman.

"Oh, Nell, don't you dislike to have anybody lecture you like that? It makes one feel so uncomfortable. I don't suppose it's so very wrong to wear bird trimming or our minister's wife wouldn't do it. You know her black velvet hat with that big bird on it with the red points on the wings, is one of the most striking hats that come to church. And her feather muff is so elegant, awfully expensive too. And what would her hat look like without that bird on it, I'd like to know? So if it isn't wicked for her it isn't wicked for

us, Nell, and I'm not going to give up looking nice just to please papa. He'd like to have me dress as antiquated as old Mrs. Noah when she came out of the ark, but I'm not going to encourage him in his old-fashioned notions. And here, Nell, just listen to this! Don't you think, he says the Episcopal Prayer Book ought to be revised for the women worshipers and omit that part of the litany where it says, 'From pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy, good Lord, deliver us.' What fol-de-rol!" And being out of breath she stopped talking and they walked away down the street together.

CHAPTER XIII

DICKEY'S VISIT

Kind hearts are more than coronets.

—Tennyson.

PLAINLY furnished and small was the house to which I was taken by Miss Katharine to stay during Polly's absence at her grandmother's in the country. But though it was destitute of fine furnishings, it was the abode of peace and love, and its lowly roof sheltered noble and kindly hearts. The two sisters lived there alone, supported mainly by Katharine's earnings in the millinery store,

though occasionally the sister, who was lame, added something to their little income by making paper flowers and other articles of bright tissues. It was her business to keep the house while Miss Katharine was at the shop, and very long and lonely the hours must have seemed to her while her sister was away.

The first day I was there a boy whom she addressed as John Charles came to the house. Apparently he had been carefully trained, for he raised his cap when the lame girl opened the door to his knock. His manners were fine, for he remained standing after he entered until she had first seated herself, as if to say, "A gentleman will not sit while a lady stands."

He had come to inquire if she wished to buy some cooking apples.

"They are very nice," said John Charles briskly, quite as if he were an old salesman. "No mashed or decayed ones among them."

"I have been wanting some apples," said Eliza. "If I knew what yours were like I might buy some."

"I have a few here to show," and John Charles drew from a small paper sack one or two bright rosy apples. "There, try one," he said. "You will find them nice and juicy and sour enough to cook quickly."

Eliza bit into one and expressed her approval of the fruit. "They will make delicious apple-sauce, I'm sure," she said. After inquiring the price she told the young merchant he might carry in a peck.

With a business-like flourish John Charles took a small note-book and pencil from his pocket and wrote something at the top of the leaf.

"I'm not delivering now," he said as he returned the note-book to his pocket. "I'm only taking orders; but I'll have your apples here in an hour."

Eliza bit her lip to keep back a smile. A boy in knee pants transacting business like a grown man, appeared quite amusing to her.

"Oh, I see," she said. "You take orders for your goods. You don't sell from door to door."

"No, indeed!" answered John Charles with a lofty air. "That's too much like peddling. I won't peddle. I prefer to get regular customers and take orders and fill them."

While he had been talking he had been glancing toward me where I hung in the window, and he now politely asked if he might come to look at me. Eliza gave a surprised consent, but watched the boy closely as he stood near and chirped to me calling me, "Po-o-o-r Dickey Downy," as soon as he found out my name. I saw from the way Eliza kept her eyes on his movements that she was expecting he would do something to hurt me, but in this she was pleasantly disappointed, for he never once touched my cage and cooed as softly when he spoke to me as Polly herself might have done.

I was quite afraid of him at first, for ever since my experience with the wicked schoolboys who clubbed us in the linden trees, and my later experience with Joe, I disliked boys very much.

When John Charles had bidden Eliza

"good-morning" and tipped his hat again and the door closed after him, she said to me: "Why, Dickey, that was a new kind of a boy! He never once tried to hurt you or to scare you. It shows that all boys are not rough, and I shall always like John Charles, for he is a little gentleman."

To this sentiment I fully agreed, and I thought, "Alas! why are not all boys as gentle as John Charles?"

In a few hours I felt as much at home with Eliza as if I had always lived there, and I was much pleased when I heard her tell Katharine at the supper table the next evening how much she had enjoyed having me with her.

"A bird is ever so much better company than a clock," she said; "though when I'm here by myself I always like to hear the clock tick. It seems as if I were not so entirely alone. But a bird is better. I talked to Dickey to-day and he twittered back. He has such a cute way of perking his little head to one side just as knowing as you please, and he acts exactly as if he were considering whether he should

answer 'yes' or 'no' to what I say, and then it is such fun to watch him smooth down his feathers. He washes and irons them so nicely and works away as industriously as if he were afraid he'd lose his 'job.'"

Miss Katharine rose from the table and stuck a lump of sugar for me to taste between the wires of my cage.

"I am surrounded by poor dead birds in the store all day," she observed, "and spend so much of my time sewing their wings and heads and tails on hats and sorting boxfuls of them for customers to look at, that even a living bird saddens me."

"Yes, it must be very depressing. What a shame to kill them; they are so cute and pretty and such happy little creatures! See how cunning he looks nibbling at that sugar," and the sister joined Miss Katharine in watching me.

"But do you know, Kathy, I don't believe that women would continue wearing bird trimmings if they stopped a minute to think about it. It doesn't seem wrong to them because they never considered the

question. They simply haven't thought about it at all."

"Somebody set the fashion and they all followed like a flock of sheep," answered the other with a sneering laugh.

"Yes, that's just the way. They go along without thinking. They only know it is the style, and they don't stop to inquire whether it can be indulged in innocently or hurtfully. Now I believe that if their attention was particularly called to it, the most of them would quit it."

Miss Katharine brightened into a smile and half unclasped her little satchel.

"If a bird could talk," pursued the lame girl, "what a revelation it could make. What lovely things it could tell us of that upper kingdom of the air where it floats and the distant land it sees! What sweet secrets of nature it knows that man with all his wisdom can never find out. And then its gift of song! Why, if thousands and thousands of dollars were spent in training the finest voice in the world it could never equal the notes of a bird. A woman who could perfectly imitate a lark's

carol would make her fortune in a month. The world would go wild over her."

"But as she can't do that she has the lark killed to stick on her hat, and then she goes wild over it," interrupted Miss Kathy.

Her sister smiled at this outburst and continued: "While I was working at that morning-glory wreath to-day I couldn't help but watch this bird of Polly's with its innocent little antics, and it made me see more than ever how wrong it is to cage and kill them. I just felt as though I ought to do something to help save the birds and, Kathy, I wonder if we were to invite some of our friends here some evening and call their attention to the subject, and explain the wrong to them, if we couldn't do some good that way? Maybe they'd decide not to wear birds on their hats."

"We might try, sister, I would be perfectly willing to try; but I'm afraid it wouldn't do much good, for we have but little influence. As long as fashionable and wealthy ladies will do it, the poorer classes will not give it up very readily."

"But they have hearts which can be appealed to. They have feelings which can be roused," answered the lame girl eagerly. "Being alone so much I have more time to think over these things than the shop girls who are hurried and busy all day, and perhaps nobody has ever tried to show them how wrong it is; but I really believe some of them could be influenced, if once they would seriously think of the wrong they are doing. That is the reason, Kathy, I suggested to get a lot of them together to talk about saving the birds."

The gentle cripple had never even heard of the great Audubon. She did not know that societies existed in many States called by the name of the distinguished naturalist, engaged in the same merciful work.

Miss Katharine drew from the satchel the paper clipping and handed it to her sister, saying: "This is a coincidence surely; I cut this out of the daily paper at the store some time ago, intending to give it to you, but I always forgot it. It is an account of the proceedings of a convention in one of the big cities. You will see

by reading it that somebody else has been thinking your identical thoughts."

"How lovely that is!" exclaimed Eliza when she had carefully read the notice. "How I should have enjoyed being at that meeting. We will help those people all we can, Kathy, by stirring up our acquaintances here. You invite the girls for tomorrow night and I'll have the house ready for them."

That I had been an inspiration to this gentle girl in her work of mercy was a great joy to me, and all the next day I was constantly bursting into a round of cheerful twitters and I swung myself in my hoop as fast as I could make it go.

The best room was swept and dusted with the greatest care, and a few extra chairs moved in from other parts of the house. My cage was transferred from its usual hook to the parlor, and about eight o'clock the guests thronged in and soon every seat was filled. They were principally girls who were clerks in stores, or worked in shops and offices, and many of them were very smartly dressed. A few,

like Miss Katharine and her sister, were more plainly attired; but all were lively and full of girlish fun and seemed to enjoy being together. My cage hung in view of every one, and I was proud to be selected as an object-lesson by the lame hostess in her introductory appeal to her guests to help save the birds. She so presented the facts that before the evening was over she had roused an enthusiasm in some of them almost equal to her own, and several pledges were given not to wear birds again.

"There is something new in the way of womanly cruelty which isn't so well known as the destruction of the birds," remarked one of the company. "The humane society ought to get after the women who wear baby lamb trimming."

"The way sealskins are procured is also very cruel," said another girl.

"I have never read much about it," answered Eliza, "but it surely cannot be so wicked as killing song birds, because the sealskin is an article of clothing which serves to keep the body warm, while a

dead bird sewed on your hat is merely for show and doesn't keep you warm or cool or anything else."

"It is not the use that is made of the sealskin that is wrong, but the cruelty of the hunters in getting it," replied the young lady who had first spoken. "They say when the parent seal is captured the young one cries for it exactly as a human baby cries after its mother. It is most pitiful to hear it wail. The branding of the poor creatures is a most brutal thing."

"Why are they branded?" asked Kathy.

"Well, you know, for some years there has been a great strife between the United States and Canada, principally over the seal fisheries. Each was afraid the other would get more than its share. To put a stop to the seals being entirely killed off, as was likely to be the case since so many poachers were in the business, one of our government agents suggested that the seals should be branded. They drive them into pens and burn them with red-hot irons."

"It isn't likely that any of us will be

called upon to deny ourselves the wearing of baby lamb, as it is quite expensive, but we can condemn it by word if not by example," observed Kathy.

The good-nights were said and the company dispersed, not so jolly and noisy as they came, but with thoughtfulness arising from awakened consciences. The humble lame girl had sowed the good seed.

Polly was to come back from her grandmother's the next week and, though I looked forward with pleasure to being with her again, I felt sorry to leave this peaceful home. The worthy lives and beautiful aims of these obscure girls of whom the world knew nothing was a sweet remembrance to carry with me.

"Thank Polly for me for Dickey Downy's visit and tell her whenever she wants to go away anywhere I'll be glad to take care of him for her," Eliza said when the time came for me to go.

She gave the cage into Miss Kathy's hand. I chirped a farewell to her and she whistled back to me and we parted to see each other no more.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COUNTRY SCHOOL

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

—Bible.

POLLY'S welcome to me was most cordial. She was bright as a cricket and full of chat about her visit. With her usual care she examined my cage closely to see that everything was in order and petted and praised me for a little while to my full content, then ran to Miss Kathy to tell her of the new story book which had been presented to her while away.

"And I am going to read you the stories some day," she added.

Her young playmates flocked in to see her and as I listened to their glad voices my heart yearned more than ever for my comrades of the woods, for a thought of spring was in the air.

As the days went by there were indeed signs all around that spring was on the way. The wind no longer bellowed hoarsely in the treetops, but had a mellow, musical sound and the raindrops that struck the window pane trickled softly as if glad to come out of the clouds.

Just after school one bright afternoon Polly came to the door on the side porch and called in to Miss Katharine:

"I'll be playing out in the yard awhile. Louise and Nancy have come to stay till half-past five o'clock, so if mother needs me you'll know where to find me."

"All right" said Miss Kathy. "Go on and have a jolly time."

And a jolly time they had, judging from the merry shouts that came in through the open door.

"I've got your tag! I've got your tag!" I could hear Polly say, and then there was a great scampering of feet and roars of laughter as they chased each other up and down the walks. This was kept up for some minutes, then a voice began:

"Intery-mintery, cutery-corn,
Apple-seed and briar-thorn,
Wire, briar, limber-lock,
Three geese in one flock;
One flew east and one flew west
And one flew over the cuckoo's nest."

"Oh, Louise, you're out! It's your turn first."

"I wonder if we are the geese?" said Nancy. Then they all giggled as if what she had said was very funny.

"Louise, Louise, look, look! You're going to have good luck," presently shouted two voices. "A ladybird has lighted on your shoulder."

"Oh, goody!" said Louise. "I wonder what my good luck is going to be?"

"Shake it off, Louise, let it light on me," said Nancy. "I want good luck to come to me too."

"It is just the color of my new crimson dress," declared Polly.

"Only your red dress hasn't spots on it," corrected Louise.

"No, but the red is about the same shade as my dress. Oh, girls, wouldn't a row of ladybirds for buttons be pretty on my waist?"

At this quaint conceit the three girls all giggled again.

"I do think they are the cutest little bugs. I never get tired of looking at them," observed Polly.

"Bugs? You wouldn't call them bugs, would you?" inquired Louise. "I think they are little beetles."

"Beetles? No, no," said Polly and Nancy both in one breath. "A beetle is a big black thing that flies around only at dusk."

"Do you suppose your father would know?" asked Louise of Polly. "Let's take it in the house and ask him, and so settle whether it is bug or beetle."

And they came running into the sitting room behind the store to show the lady-

bird to Polly's father, who was there looking over his paper.

"Is it a bug or a beetle?" they asked.

He laid down the paper and looked at the pretty little insect a moment.

"It is a ladybird."

"Yes, of course, we know that, papa; but Nancy and I say it is a bug, and Louise says it's a beetle," explained Polly.

"Louise is right," was his reply. "It is classed as a beetle. It is one of the best friends the farmer has, and the fruit grower too."

"How is it useful to him?" asked Nancy.

"Why, it eats the lice that spoil certain plants and leaves and grain. I notice that the Australian government is—Do you girls know where Australia is?" he asked, interrupting himself.

"Of course we do," they all shouted with much laughing, as if it were a great joke to ask them such a question.

"Well, I was going to tell you that the Australian government is taking steps to encourage the ladybird on purpose to help

the fruit farmers of that country. Perhaps they have heard that it brings good luck," he added with a smile.

"Let's show it to Dickey Downy and then put it out of the door and let it go home," said Polly.

"Dickey Downy wouldn't know a ladybird from a grasshopper," answered Nancy teasingly.

Polly retorted, "Don't be too sure! Dickey is a very intelligent bird, a very extraordinary bird."

She contented herself with paying me compliments, for instead of bringing the crimson beetle into the store she opened the window and let him fly away.

"Well, I'm glad I have learned something new about ladybirds," remarked Louise, as she tied her hat strings ready to go home.

"And I too," chimed in Nancy. "I am glad the Australians prize the pretty little creatures. It's nice to be useful and handsome too,"

Then both girls said good-bye and ran home.

A few days later Polly announced to Miss Kathy that she was ready to read the long promised tale.

"Mother says you will be in the back room sewing this afternoon, so I will bring my little rocker and sit here and read to you. My book is full of beautiful stories about children and birds and bees."

I too anticipated a pleasant afternoon, for my cage still hung within the doorway where I could hear and see all that took place in both apartments. Soon after dinner Miss Kathy appeared in the back room with her thimble and scissors and seated herself at the work-table. Polly drew up her chair beside her. The book she held was a pretty little affair bound in red with a silver inscription on the covers, and after being duly admired by both, Polly opened it and selected the following story, which she read aloud:

THE MOUNT AIRY SCHOOL.

The breath of blossoms was in the air and spicy scents from the woods that lined the lane on each side came floating to the de-

lighted senses of a little girl who drove slowly along the road leading to Mount Airy School.

Young horses frisked in the pastures or came whinnying to the fence as she passed. Lazy cows cropped the grass at the sides of the road, pushing their heads into the zigzag corners of the rail fence in pursuit of the tender clover that had crept through from the thrifty meadows.

The school was a little brick structure standing back a short distance from the road, with a playground on each side as enchantingly beautiful as it was novel to Alice Glenn, the little girl who had come from town by invitation of the teacher to visit the school. Accustomed to the severer discipline of the graded school of which she was a member, the unconventional ways of these children amused the young visitor greatly. But who could study on a morning like this, with the delicious warbling of the birds sounding in one's ears?

Who could be expected to take an interest in nouns and adverbs while his heart

was out in the woods with the bugs and bees or with the sheep over in yonder field, whose ba-a, ba-a, was borne in distinctly through the open door?

"I'm sure I would never have my lessons if I went to school here in the summer time," thought Alice as she glanced over the room. "The country is too lovely to be spoiled by school books. Why, that boy has a wounded bird in his desk! I wonder if Miss Harper knows?" And a moment after, Alice met the bold, defiant look of the boy himself, which seemed to say, "Well, what are you going to do about it? That bird belongs to me."

The history class being called at this moment the big boy got up, shoved the little creature to the farthest corner of his desk and giving Alice a parting scowl, went forward to recite his lesson. Notwithstanding her desire to befriend the feathered captive she soon became interested in the class and could scarcely refrain from laughing outright at the answer to the teacher's question, "What happened at Bunker Hill?"

"Old Bunker died."

This was bawled out by a freckled-faced boy, who reminded her of a rabbit, owing to a fashion he had of twitching his nose and keeping it in motion in some mysterious way. Even the teacher wanted to laugh, but assuming her sternest manner she speedily restored order.

It was during the arithmetic lesson that Alice's heart went out in pity for the youthful instructor. The majority of the pupils were bright; but an unruly fraction, one child, refused to comprehend.

"If a family consume a barrel of flour in nine weeks, what part of a barrel will they use in one week, Matilda?"

Matilda rolled her blue eyes up to the ceiling as if to find the answer there, then studied a board in the floor for several minutes, then slowly shook her head and sat down. A dozen hands were raised, and the teacher nodded permission to a small boy who analyzed it successfully.

"Now, Matilda, you try it."

But Matilda shook her head and fidgeted with her apron string.

"Try it, and we will help you," persisted the teacher.

Thus urged, Matilda cleared her throat, folded her arms and began: "If nine persons use a barrel of flour in nine weeks, in one week they would use nine times nine, which is eighty-one."

"What! eighty-one barrels? But, Matilda, it makes no difference about the number of persons. It may be one hundred or it may be twenty. Suppose it were a bushel of potatoes they consumed in nine weeks. How many would they use in one week?"

The girl again shook her head and resumed her upward gaze.

"Would they not use one-ninth of a bushel? Or, we'll take a peach for instance."

Matilda's face brightened perceptibly and almost lost its look of dejection. The teacher noted the change and smiled encouragingly as she said:

"We'll suppose a peach will last you nine days. What part of it will you eat in one day?"

The expectant look faded out of the poor girl's face. One peach to last nine days! No wonder the question seemed impossible of solution.

"Well, then," said Miss Harper quite in despair and almost perspiring in her effort to make it plain to the child, "we'll let the peach go. Suppose instead, it were a watermelon. If you ate a carload of watermelons in nine days, what part of a carload would you eat in one day?"

At the mention of her favorite fruit, Matilda's eyes glistened, her features relaxed into a broader smile, and almost before the teacher had finished she had her answer ready and gave a correct analysis. Watermelons had won.

At last the little clock that ticked away the hours on the teacher's table pointed to the time for the noon intermission, and with a whoop and halloo almost deafening, the pupils rushed out with dinner pails and baskets to eat their luncheon in the shady woods.

Miss Harper led Alice away to her boarding-place across the fields. Scarcely

taking time to taste the different kinds of jams, jellies, grape-butter, and other sauces set out by the hostess in special honor of the young visitor, Alice hastily dispatched her dinner and was soon back at the playground, where she found a bevy of girls seated on a big grapevine which one of the larger girls was swinging backward and forward amid shouts of glee. Nearby two gingham sunbonnets bobbed up and down as their owners bent their heads to watch a speckled lady-bug crawl up a twig.

"Lady-bug, lady-bug, fly away home,
Your house is on fire, your children will roam,"

repeated Esther in a low monotone.

"See, it's going now. I wonder whether it really understands us?"

"Of course it does," replied her companion positively. "Daddy-long-legs are real smart too. I caught one last night and I said over three times, 'Tell me which way our cow goes or I will kill you,' and it pointed in the direction of our pasture lot every time."

"You wouldn't really have killed the poor thing, though," exclaimed Alice, who had drawn near to look at the crimson lady-bug. "A daddy-long-legs is such a harmless creature. It has a right to live as well as we have."

"Oh, Caleb, did you catch it?" interrupted Matilda. "Bring it here!" and she beckoned to a small boy who was busy near a large beech tree some distance away. "He's been after a tree-frog," she explained. "There's one up in that tree that sings the cutest every evening and morning. I hear him when I am gathering bluebells."

"It's pretty near dead," said the boy bringing his trophy. "I guess I squeezed it too hard. We might as well kill it."

"No, no! that would be cruel; the poor little thing will soon be all right if you put it back on its tree. We'll go with you and help you put it up," replied Alice. "Come on, girls."

"It ain't hardly worth the trouble," and the boy looked at the frog disdainfully. "It's uglier than a toad, if anything. But

I never kill toads; I know better'n to do that."

"I am glad to hear it," said the visitor from town as they turned toward the elm tree. "Toads enjoy life and it's wicked to molest 'em."

"Oh, I don't know about their enjoyin' life. The reason I let 'em alone is, coz it you kill a toad, your cow'll give bad milk."

Alice did not dispute this wise statement. She could not help wishing that the same law of retaliation protected all birds, beasts, and insects.

After seeing the frog deposited in safety in a hole in one of the big boughs, she with Matilda and Esther scampered back to the swing expecting to find the others there. To their surprise the big grapevine was unoccupied, and the shouts and screams issuing from the schoolhouse led them too, to hurry on to see what was the matter.

"Maybe Jim Stubbs has got a mus'rat, or somethin' in there a-scarin' the children," suggested Esther, as they entered the door.

A crowd had gathered in front of the teacher's desk on which was placed the large dictionary, and seated on the book was the boy who winked with his nose.

"Stand back!" he called, "I'm going to let it out, and then you'll see fun."

With that he jumped down, removed the dictionary, raised the lid of the desk, and out popped a red squirrel. Round and round over the floor flew the frightened animal, dodging here and there and wildly darting into corners to evade the books and other missiles that were thrown at it. Not only the boys took a part in the cruel sport, but some of the girls helped with sticks, sunbonnets, and whatever they could lay their hands on. Two or three times the little creature was struck. At last, helpless, it stood panting while one of its tormentors dealt it a blow that killed it.

A cry of protest broke from Alice's lips, but her voice was lost in the roar of applause that followed the big boy's action, as he tossed the lifeless squirrel across the room into the face of another boy, who in turn pitched the animal at his neighbor.

"The poor little creature! How could they abuse it and take its life?" cried Alice, turning to those nearest her. The other girls shrank back abashed at her reproachful tones, which were noticed by Jim Stubbs, and that hero felt called upon to make a speech.

"Bah! boys, that girl is getting ready to cry over a dead squirrel. What d'ye think of that?" And a heartless chorus echoed his laughter.

"No, I'm too indignant to cry," replied Alice with spirit. "I never knew boys could be so awfully wicked, yes, and girls too. I should think you would love these dear little creatures, and pet and protect them. They are what make country life pleasant. I wouldn't give a fig for your pretty woods if there were no living things to be seen there."

This was an aspect of the situation the boys had never before considered. They did not realize that to a lover of nature the humblest form of animal life is interesting. Did other people really prize squirrels and frogs and lightning bugs and such things?

Just at this moment the teacher entered, and the crestfallen pupils busied themselves in gathering up the scattered books and other articles used in storming the squirrel.

"My young visitor is quite shocked by such an exhibition of cruelty," said Miss Harper, when she had learned how matters stood. "Think what the woods would be without the song of birds and the chirp and hum of insects. Your playground teems with happy beings that love the warmth and sunlight as well as you do. Would not the forests be robbed of half their beauty and interest if the squirrels and chipmunks and birds and butterflies were killed off?"

"Wimmen folks are nice ones to talk about cruelty to birds," sneered the big boy to his neighbor, "when they stick wings and tails and whole birds on their hats and bonnets whenever they can raise a cent to buy 'em with. Oh, yes, wimmen are awful consistent! They are, for a fact."

Had his words reached Miss Harper's ears she might have replied that sensible

and humane "wimmen folks" regarded the fearful slaughter of birds as little less than a crime; but unfortunately she did not hear this and resumed:

"Yet you hunt out these harmless and beautiful creatures and wantonly destroy them. Nearly every boy gives way to this savage, brutal impulse to kill something. He couldn't tell why if you were to ask him. Children, do you know there is a society whose members pledge themselves to protect the birds? I wish we might organize one here to-day. I am sure, from a spirit of kindness, you would like to unite in a promise not to willfully harm any of these wonderful creatures that God has placed around us."

When Alice Glenn drove home that evening she carried with her a glad heart, for in her pocket was a copy of the rules and by-laws of the "Anti-Cruelty Society, of Mount Airy School," which Miss Harper had organized that afternoon. And it was signed not only by the girls and all the smaller boys, but by big Jim Stubbs and the boy who winked with his nose.

CHAPTER XV

POLLY'S FAREWELL

Happy little maiden,
Give, oh, give to me
The highness of your courage,
The sweetness of your grace,
To speak a large word in a little place.

—*E. S. Phelps-Ward.*

CLOSING the volume, Polly laid it in her lap.

"That was a good story," observed Miss Kathy, as the child paused.

The little girl did not immediately reply, but leaned forward and looked wistfully in her companion's face for a moment.

"Do you think it is so very wicked to keep—that is, to—to deprive a bird of its liberty?" she asked timidly.

"Oh, I don't know that it could be called wicked. A canary bird, born in a cage, that never knew any other home, would be apt to die if it were turned loose to shift for itself and get its own living. It possibly could not stand the exposure to the weather," replied Miss Katharine.

"But supposing it wasn't a canary," said Polly hesitatingly; "supposing it might be a redbird, or a wren, or—or ——"

"Or a bobolink?" Miss Kathy smiled as she supplied the word.

"Well—yes, a bobolink, for instance." And Polly glanced toward me.

"Any captured bird certainly feels very bad to be shut up in a cage all its life, though I have seen robins in captivity that grew to be as tame as canaries. My aunt had one that lived twelve years in a cage. It would peck her cheek, and pretend to kiss her, and do all sorts of sweet little tricks. His cage door stood open, and he

went in and out as it suited him, but he never thought of flying away. However, it is only natural to suppose that hopping about in a narrow space would be dreadful to a bird accustomed to spreading its wings and soaring up through the sky whenever and wherever it pleased."

Miss Kathy looked at the clock. She saw it was time for her to go back into the store, then gathered up her work and went into the front room. When Polly was left to herself I could see she was thinking very hard. The rocking-chair kept moving faster, and her forehead was drawn into a little pucker between her eyes. She sighed too, occasionally, as if she were sad.

I noticed that Miss Katharine from her post behind the counter looked in at the child from time to time, and I heard her say half-aloud: "If the fashionable women of the land had hearts as merciful and consciences as tender as that dear little Polly's, the slaughter of the birds would soon come to an end."

The birch chair finally ceased to rock. The deep-drawn wrinkle passed away from

Polly's forehead. She laid down her book and came to my cage, then she stood for a moment looking at me tenderly. Then she took the cage down from its hook and carried it to the door leading to the garden. The air was pleasant, and a sunbeam slanted across the porch making a yellow gleam on the lattice. How beautiful it looked to my weary eyes!

"Dearest Dickey Downy, good-bye," she said to me, and her voice had a little tremor in it. "You had a right to be happy and live out of doors among the trees, and I kept you a prisoner. Please forgive me for it, and forgive me for wearing birds' wings on my Sunday hat. I shall never do such cruel things again. It's coming spring now, Dickey, so be happy and fly away to the beautiful clouds."

She set the little wire door wide open. A warm zephyr swept by, laden with the scent of wild flowers and all sweet growing things. My heart fluttered with joy. I heard the far cry of the hills as I floated out and upward, higher and higher, on joyous wing. I was free, free!

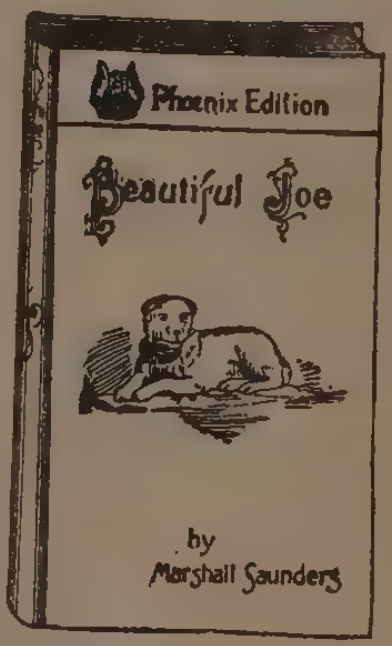
OUR SERIES

THE

Phœnix Series

Price per copy, 25 cents net;
average postage, 5 cents per copy

The Phœnix Series was begun some years since. It is made up of books which for the most part have had a sufficient sale to enable us to reduce their price from 50 cents or $1.00 to 25 cents net per copy. From time to time we have enlarged the series. We now add a number of books hitherto sold at much larger prices. The entire series will be found most valuable and interesting. At 25 cents per copy it is possible for any one to supply themselves with good literature at a trifling expense. Many of the volumes are suitable for text-books in Bible-class work. **A complete list sent upon request.**



Along the Pilgrimage. Wayland Hoyt, D. D.

Beautiful Joe. Marshall Saunders.

Bible and How to Teach It, The. Alvah Hovey, D. D.

Dickey Downy. Virginia Sharpe Patterson.

Half-Hours with the Christ. T. W. Powell, D. D.

Magna Charta of the Kingdom of God, The. George F. Genung, D. D.

Ministry of the Spirit, The. A. J. Gordon, D. D.

Outline Analysis of the Books of the Bible. Prof. B. C. Taylor, D. D.

Pilgrim's Progress. John Bunyan.

Young Man's Difficulties with His Bible, A. D. W. Faunce, D. D.

American Baptist Publication Society

OUR SERIES

LIGHT AND TRUTH SERIES

Price, per copy, 50 cents

Average postage, 15 cts. per volume

This series of books contains many of our best and most important publications. Some have had a large sale in the higher priced editions, others have merited a much wider circulation than they have had. At the greatly reduced price at which we now offer them, a sale of thousands will no doubt result.

We give below a few titles. Send for a complete list

Baptism of the Ages and of the Nations, William Cathcart, D. D.
Christianity and the Social State. George C. Lorimer, D. D.
Dawn of Christianity, The. Prof. H. C. Vedder.
Epistles of Paul the Apostle, The. George G. Findlay, B. A.
First Epistle of John, The. Robert Cameron.
Hours with a Skeptic. D. W. Faunce, D. D.
Inspiration Considered as a Trend. D. W. Faunce, D. D.

American Baptist Publication Society

OUR SERIES

The Windflower .. Series ..

Price
50 cts. per copy

Average postage 15 cents per volume

A new series of cloth-bound books that were originally published by the Society at $1.00 and $1.25. 12mo size. Most of the volumes are illustrated. **Especially suitable for gift purposes.**

A few of the best titles are given below. Send for a complete list

Beautiful Joe. Marshall Saunders.
Dickey Downy. Virginia Sharpe-Patterson.
Holy War, The. John Bunyan.
Lily of France, A. Caroline Atwater Mason.
Lone Point. Grace Livingston Hill.
Martina Meriden. Mrs. A. E. Johnson.
Pilgrim's Progress. John Bunyan.
Saxenhurst. D. C. Eddy, D. D.
White Shield, The. Caroline Atwater Mason.
Windflower, The. Caroline Atwater Mason.

American Baptist Publication Society

The Half Dollar Religious Library

To meet a popular demand we have gathered together from various publishers a selection of religious books, many of which have become classics in the religious world. Most of these volumes have been sold at from $1.00 to $1.50 per volume, and are here offered at a reduced price for the first time. The religious public will appreciate this opportunity to purchase two or three books of value for the price formerly asked for one. The editions of some titles are limited, so that it will be well to order at once before the stock is exhausted.

We list a few titles. ***A complete list sent upon request.***

Price, per copy, 50 cents

Average postage, 15 cents per copy

Aliens or Americans? H. B. Grose.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit. R. A. Torrey.

Christ of To-day, The. G. Campbell Morgan.

Elijah the Prophet. W. M. Taylor.

Foretokens of Immortality. Newell Dwight Hillis.

God's Perfect Will. G. Campbell Morgan.

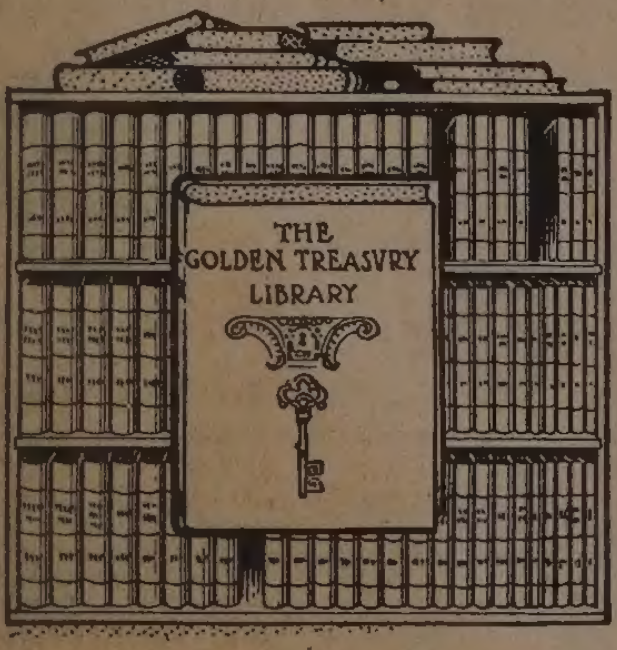
Growing Christian, The. W. E. Biederwolf.

Jesus Christ and the Social Question. T. G. Peabody.

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

A New Library

The Publication Society has led all other Sunday School publishing houses in the making of carefully selected Sunday School Libraries. It has made a specialty of gathering together some of the best volumes of other publishers, together with some of the most interesting of its own issue into "ready-made" libraries of from fifty to sixty volumes. These sets of carefully chosen books are bound in uniform cloth binding which is durable and attractive. Put up in a wooden case with catalogues they are ready for immediate use.



The manufacture of a thousand sets at a time makes it possible to offer these libraries at less than one-third the cost of the same books if purchased at publishers' prices. The latest of our long list of Sunday School Library Successes is called

The Golden Treasury Library

There are sixty titles. Send for a complete list

Price, in wooden case ready for use, $25.00 net, express or freight extra

Schools wishing to purchase this set on the instalment plan can do so by sending for our agreement blank, which requires **$10.00** cash with order, and **$4.00** per month for five months thereafter.

American Baptist Publication Society

BUTTONS FOR REWARDS

PROGRESSIVE REWARDS

Thousands of Sunday Schools have used the Star System, and the Cross and Crown Series of graded rewards with great success. These schools are now looking for something new which will have the same effect of increasing attendance. To such and to the thousands who have never used any such system we offer two new series of progressive rewards in button form—the **Young Reaper Rewards** and the **Light and Life Series.** Nothing more beautiful or attractive has been made. **Send for illustrated circular.**

COLORED SOUVENIR BUTTONS

Price, **15 cents** per dozen, postpaid
Sold only in dozen lots Series not broken

Bible scenes copied from famous paintings bearing on the lessons. Colored celluloid buttons, furnished with pins, and mounted on cardboard (3½x6¼ inches), with the scriptural description of each scene printed around the button.

Series I. Twelve designs taken from the Life of Christ.

Series II. Twelve designs taken from the Life of Paul.

Series III. Twelve designs taken from the Old Testament.

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

COLORED CELLULOID BUTTON

This button is a reproduction of the famous original oil painting by E. Goodwin Lewis, which was exhibited all through Euprope and finally purchased for $5,000 and presented to one of our English colleges. The aim of the artist has been to represent as literally as possible the historic fact of the baptism of Christ as narrated in the Gospels.

Price, **20 cents** per dozen; **$1.50** per hundred, postpaid.

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY